THE CHILDREN'S STORY OF THE WAR

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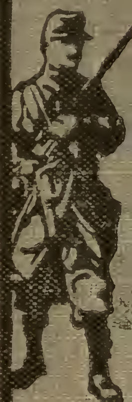

By Sir Edward Parrott, M.A., LL.D.

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THE CHILDREN'S STORY OF THE WAR

BY

SIR EDWARD PARROTT, M.A., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE PAGEANT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE," "ALLIES, FOES, AND NEUTRALS," ETC.

The Last Phase—Victory!

157378
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THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, LTD.
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Freedom bringeth joy that singeth
All day long and never tires:
No more sadness—all is gladness
In the heart that she inspires;
For she breathes a soft compassion
Where the tyrant kindled rage;
And she saith to every nation—
"*Brethren, cease wild war to wage:*
Earth is your blest heritage."

Though kings render their defender
Titles, gold, and splendours gay,
Lo, thy glory, warrior gory,
Like a dream shall fade away!
Gentle Peace her balm of healing
On the bleeding world shall pour;
Brethren, love for brethren feeling,
Shall proclaim, from shore to shore,
"*Shout—the sword shall slay no more.*"

THOMAS COOPER.

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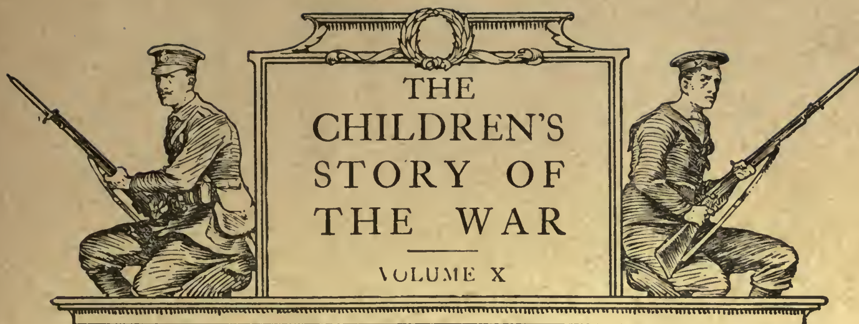
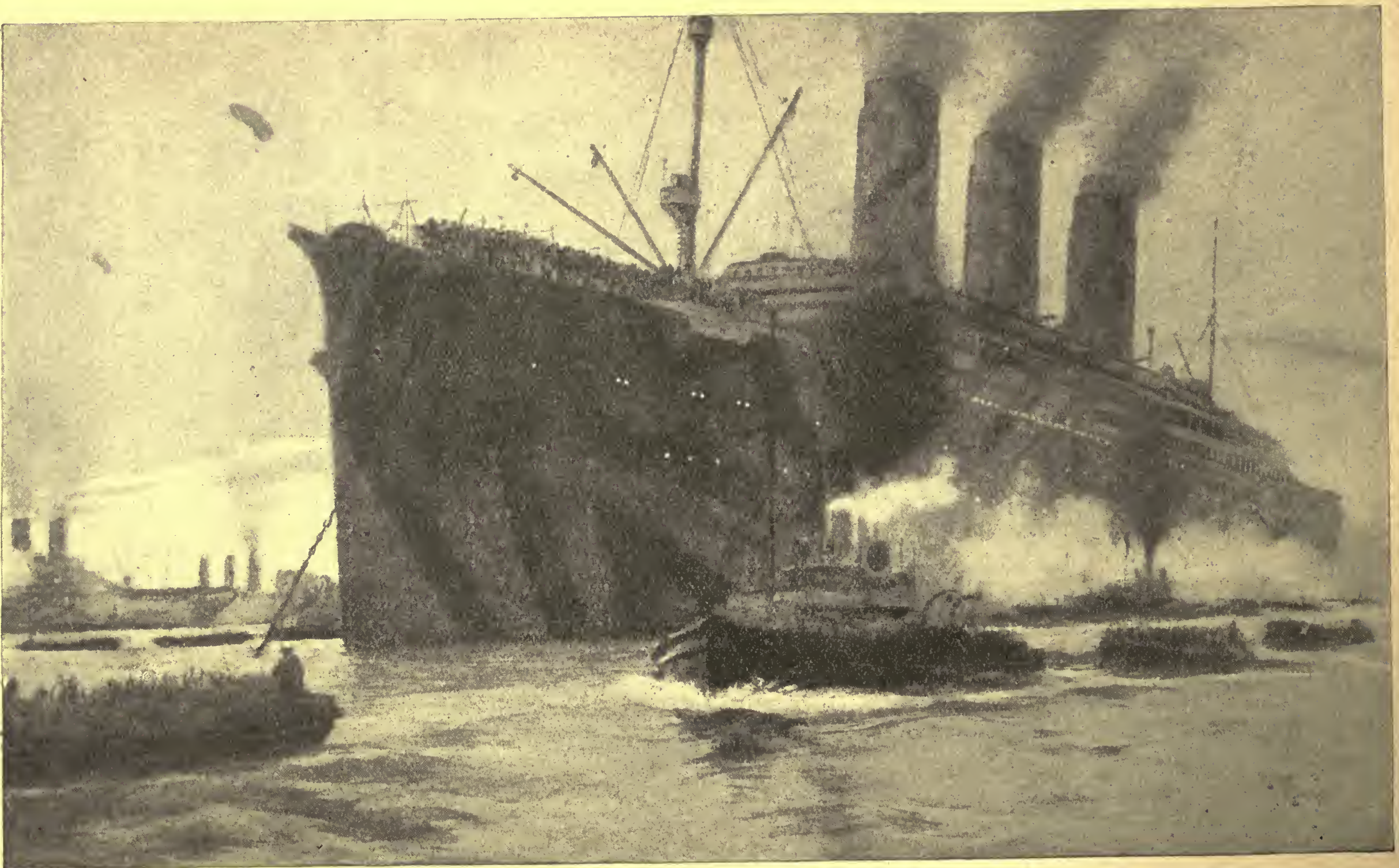


CHAPTER I.

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF WAR.

THE fourth anniversary of our entrance into the Great War fell upon a Sunday, and in every church in the land a service of Remembrance was held. It was a day of prayer, of confession, of thanksgiving and resolve. The Allied victory on the Marne seemed to have come as a special benefaction for the occasion, and in every sermon that was preached the note of thanksgiving was uppermost. Men everywhere regarded that victory as the turn of the tide; but all knew that the war had not yet been won, and that the nation would have to make many sacrifices and suffer many sorrows before it could rejoice in complete victory.

While Britain was unshaken in her confidence that the cause of right and freedom must prevail, the Germans knew that they were living under the shadow of defeat. To outward seeming they appeared to have accomplished most of the aims which they had in view when they drew the sword. They had crushed Belgium beneath their heel, and were seated more or less comfortably on the Belgian coast. They had overrun Serbia and Montenegro, had forced a German peace upon Rumania, and were rapidly turning Russia into a vassal state. Their armies had won the mastery of Central Europe; their legions held sway from the North Sea to the Adriatic, and from Flanders on the west to the Ukraine on the east. Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey were their puppets, compelled to wage reluctant war at the imperious bidding of their Kaiser.



The Hamburg-Amerika Liner Vaterland (now the Leviathan) arriving at a French Port with American Troops.

(By permission of L'Illustration.)

The *Vaterland* was one of the finest of American liners. She was interned at New York when war broke out, and was seized by the United States. She can carry 12,000 troops.

No Allied soldier, save as a prisoner, stood upon the soil of the German Fatherland; the war had been mainly fought out on alien ground except in East Prussia and on their Western frontier, where Allied airmen made continual raids. Their ancestral territory had not suffered from the ravages of war.

For four years they had carried fire and sword far and wide; lordly cities, rich towns, and innumerable villages had fallen into their hands; three nations had gone down before them; they had gathered in immeasurable booty; they had celebrated numberless victories, and had transformed the map of Europe: yet they knew in their hearts that their great adventure must end in failure. After four years of war, one of their leading statesmen publicly said what millions of his fellow-countrymen were secretly thinking—they could never win by purely military means. What had brought them to this painful conclusion?

They had begun the war with the mightiest and most perfect military machine ever known to men. They had chosen their own time, after long and diligent years of preparation. They had trained and disciplined the whole nation for war, and had encouraged their people to believe that Providence had marked them out for the overlordship of the world. From their cradles they had been taught that armed strife was the noblest and most profitable work of life. Their empire had been forged on the anvil of war, and they were assured that only by war could it rise to the height of its pre-ordained greatness. They had staked everything—their vast trade, their prosperity, their overseas possessions, their future—upon their attempt to grasp world-empire; but they had made one fatal mistake—they had relied upon the might of their armies and upon the might of their armies alone.

Students of war as they were, they knew well that their land conquests could never be permanent so long as they were cut off from the highways of the sea. They had before them the great warning of Napoleon's fate. He had done what the Kaiser aimed at doing. He had made himself master of Europe; he had imposed his will upon nations, and had made and unmade kings. At the height of his power his empire extended from Denmark to Naples; three capitals owned his sway; and he was also supreme in Spain, Switzerland, and Germany. Never was there such a dazzling figure of majesty and might.

After the greatest of his victories a British statesman said, "Roll up that map of Europe; it will not be wanted these ten years." Yet at the moment when he made the remark Napoleon's doom had been sealed. "The ships of Nelson were the victors at Waterloo."

Lack of sea power in the end ruined Napoleon. There came a time when Britain alone of European nations held out against him. He could not reach her with the sword, but he could strike at that upon which her life depended—her commerce. He issued the "Berlin Decrees," by which he forbade any continental country to trade with Great Britain. No British ship was to be allowed to approach the shore of any European country, and no subject of Napoleon was to carry on trade with the "boycotted" nation. The British retaliated by blockading the ports of France and her Allies, and by forbidding neutral countries to trade with them. This meant that the overseas business of the Continent almost came to an end. The consequence was that while the French armies were tramping to and fro and winning victories in many lands, an unceasing and noiseless pressure was being exerted upon the vitals of their country. Every year she grew poorer and poorer; every year Napoleon grew more and more needy. He lacked money and he lacked credit, and in order to enforce his decrees he had to play the tyrant amongst those nations that were reluctant to do his bidding. This roused them to hatred, and in the end they allied themselves with Britain and made an end of him.

No man knew the reason of Napoleon's downfall better than Bismarck, the real creator of the German Empire. So long as he remained in power his fixed purpose was to keep on good terms with the three sea Powers of Europe—Britain, Italy, and Russia; more especially with Britain, the greatest of them all. As you know, the Kaiser William dismissed this wise old statesman and became his own Chancellor. He clearly understood that, great as was Napoleon's power, "it ceased, like that of certain wizards, when it reached the water." He could, however, afford to ignore Bismarck's solemn warnings if he could make himself powerful on the ocean. He therefore set himself to build a big navy. With the cry, "Our future lies on the water," he persuaded his people to grant him the necessary money; and as soon as his ships were afloat, he felt that

Napoleon's fate could not be his. Invincible by land and powerful by sea, he could realize all his dreams of glory and succeed where Napoleon had failed.

While his navy was growing in strength he himself grew in arrogance and pride. He browbeat every nation of Europe, and irritated neighbouring Powers almost beyond endurance by swashbuckling talk about shining armour and mailed fists. He made no secret of the fact that his navy was to be so strong that it could challenge " even the greatest naval Power "—that is, Britain. By the year 1920 he hoped to have forty-one battleships, twenty large cruisers, and forty small cruisers. People at home now became alarmed, and many cries were raised for a speedy strengthening of our sea forces. The British Government, anxious that there should not be a wasteful competition in the building of warships, proposed what is known as a " naval holiday." In the year 1912 it was suggested that there should be a pause in shipbuilding on both sides, and that neither side should increase its fleets out of due proportion to its present strength. To this the Kaiser would not agree, and Britain thereupon decided to lay down two ships for every one built by Germany. Thus the only result of the Kaiser's naval ambitions was to increase the sea forces of Britain.

Early in the summer of 1914 the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo gave him the long-looked-for opportunity of plunging Europe into that Armageddon for which he had so long prepared. He needed another six or ten years before his navy would be strong enough to play its part ; but he dared not miss the opportunity, because the Crown Prince and the military party were clamouring for war, and the bulk of the nation was with them. So he threw down the gage of battle, and in order, as he vainly hoped, to fall upon France before she was ready, committed the crime of invading Belgium, which he was pledged to keep inviolate against foreign foes. This crime brought Britain, the greatest of all naval Powers, into the war; and, subsequently, Japan, Italy, and America, the other three nations most powerful upon the seas. The French and Russian fleets were already arrayed against him. Thus it came about that in the third year of war all the great navies of the world were arrayed against Germany.

Unlike Napoleon, whom the Kaiser now resembled in

lacking naval power, the Kaiser's armies did not prove invincible. The Russians maintained a stubborn resistance ; the French, whom he had imagined to be a feeble folk, thrilled the world by their superb courage and self-sacrifice ; and Britain set herself to build up an army of millions, and devote all her vast resources to the work of war. Within three months of the march into Belgium the German armies in the West were engirdled by an iron ring, and brought to a standstill. Besieged all along a line from the North Sea to the borders of Switzerland, they were forced into a long trench war, which gave the Allies the necessary time in which to put forth all their strength, and so meet the enemy upon an equal footing. In vain the Germans strove to burst the bars that hemmed them in. Meanwhile in the East the fortunes of war swayed to and fro. Treachery began to do its work. Disheartened by military failure and intense suffering, and groaning under a despotic Government, the Russian people were persuaded to overthrow their rulers and plunge the land into internal strife, while a mighty and pitiless foe was fast closing in upon them. Russia went all to pieces, and with her fell Rumania.

This tragedy released large numbers of men hitherto employed upon the Eastern front, and for a space gave Germany those reinforcements which enabled her to make five furious attempts in the first seven months of the year 1918 to break out of her trench lines in the West. You have recently read the story of these huge offensives, and you know that, though our armies were forced back, they were nowhere broken or dismayed. Thanks to the splendid endurance of the British and French, every blow was foiled. The enemy could not separate the armies of the Allies, nor could he reach Paris and the Channel ports. For the first time during the war the Allies were fighting as one great united force, under the single command of a master mind, and every onset was met without exhausting the reserves. Further, they were hourly receiving reinforcements of fresh, eager soldiers from across the Atlantic. At length, when the outlook seemed darkest, the Germans, utterly deceived as to the strength of their foes, made a grievous blunder, which the Allies were quick to profit by. At a bound they gained the upper hand, and at once opened a new era, full of promise for the cause of freedom.

Such, in the briefest possible outline, was the course of the

land war during four years of fierce and anxious struggle. We cannot praise too highly the courage, endurance, and resource of our fighting men ; but we must never forget that they could not have fought at all but for our command of the ocean. They could never have been carried to France, or been maintained overseas, or reinforced from America, but for our sea power. It has been well said that the sailor carries the soldier on his back. Not only did our seamen transport our soldiers to the various theatres of war, and keep open the routes of supply for them, but they saved the mother country from starvation and enabled her to continue her overseas trade. And all the time they were slowly but surely winning the war. They were silently and steadily bringing to bear upon the enemy the same kind of pressure which had ensured the downfall of Napoleon.

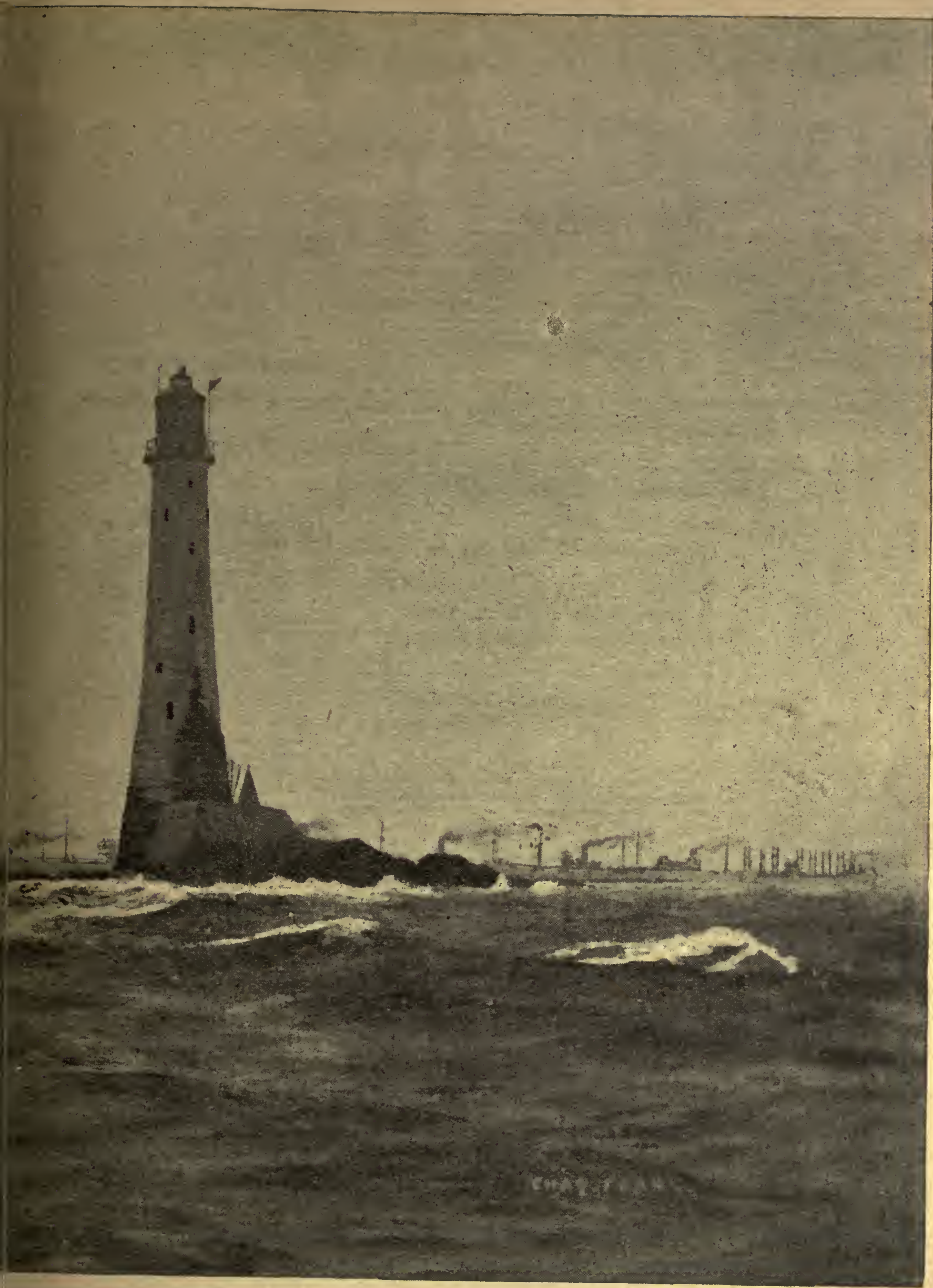
The Navy won its crowning victory, and established that condition of things which made the ultimate doom of the enemy certain, within a few hours of the declaration of war. By what looked like a happy accident, the fleets of Britain had been mobilized, and were in complete battle readiness at the very moment when the war trumpets began to blow. Our Grand Fleet was at its battle stations while we were giving the enemy the choice of peace or war. By its prompt action and overwhelming strength it prevented the German High Seas Fleet from leaving its harbours. Only once in four years did that fleet dare to emerge in strength and offer battle. On June 1, 1915, off the shores of Jutland, it came into action ; and but for the heavy sea fogs and the coming of night, could scarcely have escaped complete destruction. As it was, it reached its harbours with heavy loss, and there it remained, as useless as though it did not exist. In effect, the Kaiser lost the war from the moment when his fleet was contained. Within a week our transports were carrying troops to France, and our merchant ships were going about their lawful business just as though the Germans possessed no navy at all.

It is true that there were German war vessels at large on the high seas, and that they made raids upon our shipping ; but one by one they were hunted down and destroyed. German sea power finally vanished, so far as surface ships were concerned, on that December day in the year 1914 when Admiral Doveton Sturdee sank von Spee's fleet off the Falkland Islands.

Passing the Lighthouse: a British

(From the picture by Charles Pears, R.O.I.

Our illustration shows the convoy system at work. The line of merchant vessels, with its escort of its occupants peering down into the green-blue water of the Channel and ready to signal the presence of a



onvoy steaming up Channel.

y permission of The Sphere.)

stroyers to port and starboard, is passing the famous Eddystone lighthouse. Overhead is a "blimp," adly submarine.

The "cut and run" raids made by German cruisers on the shores of Britain, and the attacks upon convoys, were mere episodes of bravado which challenged our command of the seas in no greater degree than a hooligan challenges the peace of a city when he breaks the window of a shop with stones and then hurries into the mazes of the back streets to escape arrest.

Thus at the very outset of war the navy of Germany was rendered impotent, and her mercantile marine was swept from the ocean. The Central Powers were cut off from the overseas world; they could no longer supply themselves with raw materials or carry on their ocean commerce. In the year 1913 the seaborne trade of Germany and Austria-Hungary exceeded in value £863,000,000. In a week that trade had ceased. Then began our blockade, which was only partial at first, but grew more and more stringent as the war went on. Every trade route in the world was patrolled; every avenue to European shores was closely guarded; and every ship that attempted to bring supplies to the enemy was seized. The pressure grew as the war lengthened out, and at the end of four years Austria was starving, Germany was living on husks, and Turkey and Bulgaria could scarcely keep body and soul together.

When Russia committed suicide, Germany flattered herself with the hope that she would be able to draw huge stores of wheat from the rich steppe lands; but she was soon grievously disappointed. The humiliating peace which she forced upon Rumania was meant to provide her with corn and oil from the teeming plains of that country. Again the hungry were not filled; and meanwhile, owing to the continual withdrawal of men from the work of agriculture and the lack of fertilizers, the harvests of the Central Powers grew scantier and scantier. The Allies, because of their sea power, could draw supplies from North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, and Africa; but the Central Powers were confined to the ever-dwindling produce of their own fields and to those of the nations whom they had overthrown. Our sea power gave us a grip upon the throat of the enemy, and with every month that passed that grip grew tighter and tighter. In the end it would strangle the life out of the enemy.

It was the Navy's grip which forced Austria in June 1918 to make that disastrous offensive against the Italians which I

described in Chapter XXXIX. of our ninth volume. Rightly was her effort described as a "hunger march." It came to nothing, as you know. The rich plains of North Italy might have brought her some relief; but the resolution of the Italians and of their allies forbade her soldiers either to descend from the mountains or to cross the Piave. Meanwhile, distress in Austria and disunity amidst her many discontented races were growing apace. Her plight was the direct outcome of that slow but sure strangulation which we were exercising from the sea.

The Kaiser had hoped for a short, sharp war, and had, indeed, promised his soldiers that they should return bringing their sheaves with them "before the leaves fall." The two wars which had established the German Empire were brief and decisive: the war of 1866 only extended over seven weeks, and the war of 1870–71 occupied but six months. He had every hope that what had been accomplished so rapidly in 1870–71 could be achieved in 1914. Had his expectations been realized, sea power would have played but a small part in the war.

By February 1915, however, it was clear to every one that the end was yet far off, and that our command of the seas would ultimately give us victory. Some great effort must be made to stave off this impending ruin. The Kaiser and his advisers believed that they possessed a weapon which would assuredly bring Britain to her knees. When the war began they had some thirty or forty submarines, but they had no special faith in them. When, however, these U-boats were able to sink three of our cruisers in a single day, and send to the bottom many of our merchant vessels, they came to the conclusion that if Germany's future did not lie *on* the water, it certainly lay *under* the water. Larger and more powerful craft were built, and when the numbers were sufficient they felt themselves ready to strike a blow at Britain's heart—her mercantile marine.

In February 1915 the Kaiser announced that the waters around Great Britain and Ireland, including the whole of the English Channel, formed a war zone in which every Allied vessel would be sunk and every neutral vessel would be in danger of destruction. Before long his submarines were sinking peaceful merchant ships in the most ruthless fashion, and murdering seamen and passengers, in utter defiance of every rule of war and every dictate of mercy. In the first five months

of this campaign over 1,550 persons were killed by attacks on British vessels. The sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, and the consequent loss of over one thousand lives, sent a thrill of horror through the civilized world. Americans especially were roused to such loathing that they nearly declared war. More than three years later an American delegate at a British Labour Conference described this outrage as "the blackest and most horribly unsavoury piece of piracy in the world's history," and American soldiers charged the enemy upon the battlefields of France with the battle-cry, "*Lusitania!*"

There were people in Germany who besought the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, not to proceed with this ruthless submarine war. They pointed out that, sooner or later, it would drive neutral nations into arms against them, and thus bring about Germany's ruin. They besought in vain: the Chancellor was sure that in a few months Britain would be forced to cry aloud for mercy. As for America, he snapped his fingers at her. She might bluster and threaten, and her President might call High Heaven to witness against Germany's manifold crimes; but what more could she do? She had no army, and long before she could create one the British mercantile marine would be so reduced that the proud and stubborn islanders would be starving and humbly begging for peace. Even suppose that America could arm and drill her citizens, how were they to be transported to Europe? There would be far too few ships left for the purpose, and every transport that sailed would be a target for a German submarine. From three to four thousand miles of ocean lay between the shores of America and the battlefields of France, and every mile of the way the troopships would be a mark for the deadly torpedo. The Kaiser believed that, at the best, the Americans could not send more than thirty thousand men to Europe. America might safely be defied to do her worst; the U-boats would win the war.

As a matter of fact, this desperate policy was forced upon Germany. It might fail, of course, but there was no other way of escape. Unless Britain was driven out of the war, her sea power would in the end bring Germany to her knees. "Necessity knows no law," said the Chancellor, when trying to defend the invasion of Belgium. He might have made the same excuse for the crimes which the U-boats were perpetrating every day.

In April 1916 the German Government, in reply to American remonstrances, promised that passenger ships should not be sunk without due warning, provided that they made no resistance and did not try to escape. For some time after this promise the sinking of ships was not so ruthless, though there was still much distress and many lives were sacrificed. America renewed her protests, but in vain; and on January 31, 1917, Germany, now convinced that President Wilson would never draw the sword, began that "unrestricted U-boat warfare" for which her hotheads had long clamoured. Merely sinking British ships was of no use, they said, for Britain was able to employ not only her own vessels, but the shipping of the world. Every vessel, no matter what its flag, character, cargo, destination, or errand, must be sent to the bottom, and no silly, sentimental cries for mercy must be listened to. Only in this way could Britain be overcome.

Then began a reign of terror at sea, with the result that America declared war, and brought to the aid of the Allies her vast resources of men, money, and material. It is idle to denounce the German Emperor for thus goading America into war. He could not help himself. It was the only way in which he could try to fling off that strangle-hold of sea-power which was certain to overwhelm him in the end.

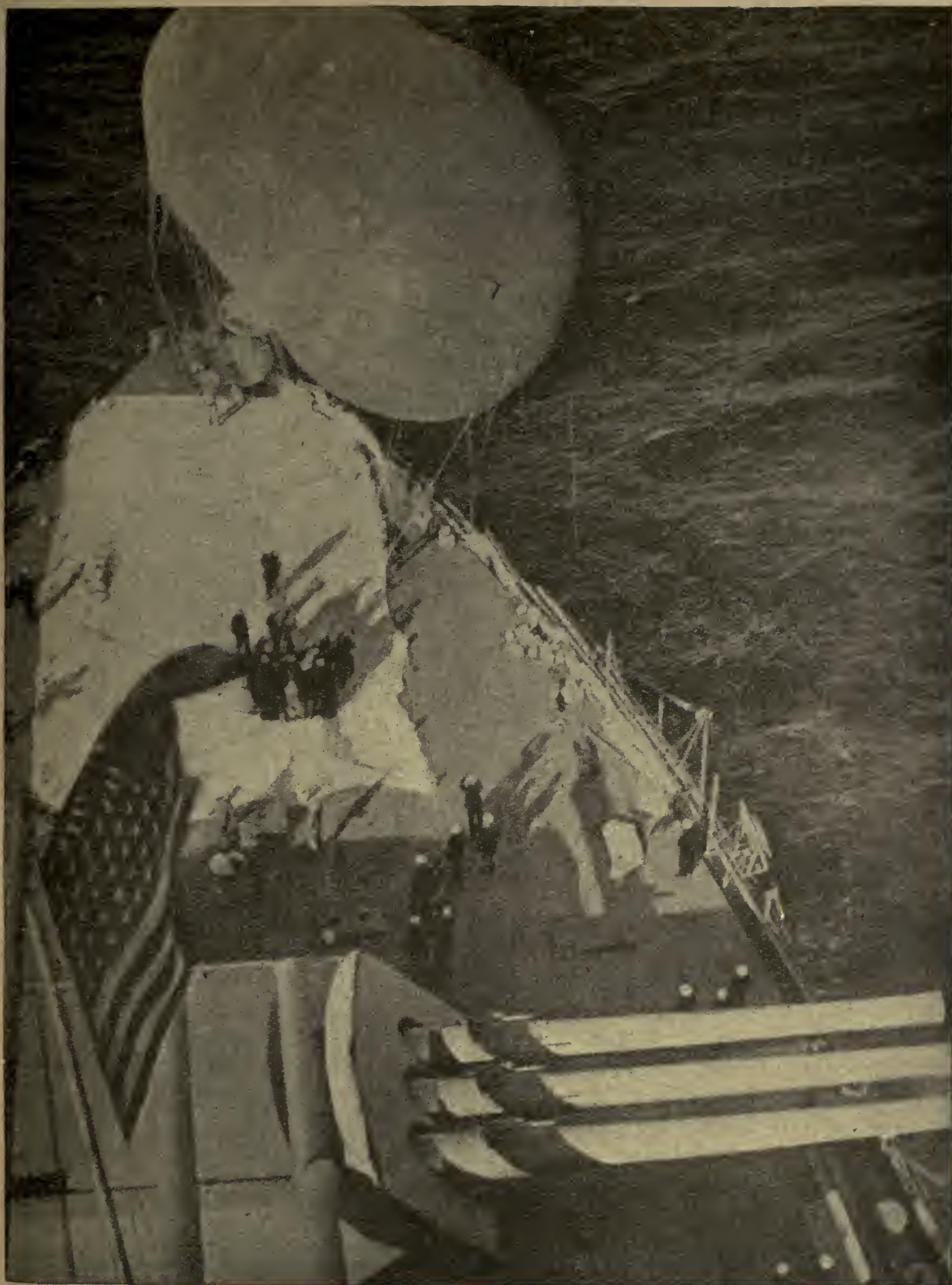
The U-boats gave him a gambler's chance, and Britain was now faced with the worst of all her perils. If the tonnage of the world could be sunk much faster than it could be replaced, Britain simply could not continue the war. She would be forced to cease fighting and to sue for peace. She soon had cause for genuine alarm. Between 25th March and the end of April 1917, 133 large ships were sent to the bottom by mine or torpedo. Again, in June, the loss was heavy; but from that month onward the rate of loss began to fall steadily.

In March 1918 the First Lord of the Admiralty told us that up to the end of the year 1917 the world's tonnage had been reduced by over 11,800,000 tons, the British share being just over 7,000,000 tons. Of this loss we had replaced by new ships over 6½ million tons, and by the seizure of enemy vessels over 2½ million tons, leaving a balance to the bad of about 2½ million tons, or a reduction of the world's tonnage amounting to 8 per cent. Grave as was this loss, it showed clearly that even if the U-boats met with the same success in the future they would not be

able to reduce us to the starvation point for several years to come. Meanwhile the world's shipyards were growing busier and busier, and their output was increasing every day. During the last quarter of the year 1917 matters had so far improved that the losses only exceeded the supply of new ships by about 100,000 tons per month, and it was hoped that before long this leeway would be made up.

Meanwhile the British Navy was devoting all its energies to the work of destroying the U-boats that were working the mischief. Ceaseless and unremitting war was made upon them, and various new devices were invented which proved very deadly. In earlier pages of this work I have described some of the methods adopted for spying out and attacking enemy submarines. During his speech in the House of Commons on August 7, 1918, the Prime Minister was able to tell us that at least 150 of these ocean pests had been destroyed, and that more than half that number had come to grief in the course of the previous year. The Germans loudly protested that they had suffered no such loss; but early in September the British Government published the names of 150 U-boat captains who had either been sunk with their vessels or were then prisoners of war. This proved up to the hilt the truth of the Prime Minister's statement. To this list the Admiralty added a remark that the names of German officers found guilty of the worst and most cruel of the outrages had been carefully marked down, and that special endeavours had been made to bring their active careers to a swift end. Amongst those who had paid the penalty of their crimes were Valentiner, who had shown himself a monster of barbarity on many occasions; Werner, who sank hospital ships; von Forstner, who had destroyed the *Falaba;* Schwieger, who sent the *Lusitania* to the bottom; and Wagenfure, who ordered forty of the crew of the *Belgian Prince* to line up on the deck of his submarine, and then sank the vessel, leaving his wretched victims to drown.

By the opening of the fifth year of war Britain had the upper hand of the submarine menace. The Navy had buckled to the task with all the skill and resource of its ancient fame. The submarines, formerly hunters, were now hunted; the coastal waters were made too hot for them, and they were forced to do their murderous work one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles out at sea. The convoy system was a



Observation Balloon for Service with a United States Battleship.
(*Topical.*)

Most of the Allied warships now carry an observation balloon, which is sent up when the ship proceeds to sea for the purpose of acting as a U-boat "spotter." The balloon is shown rising from the "bed" on which its envelope rests when it is out of use.

success, and fleets of merchant vessels escorted by cruisers and destroyers, with "blimps" and observation balloons for detecting the presence of the hidden foe, constantly came safely to port. From the air, on the surface, and under the water the enemy submarines were so assailed that volunteers could no longer be persuaded to man them.

One other aspect of the Allied sea-power must detain us for a moment. While the command of the seas remained with the great naval Powers arrayed against Germany, even victory by land could avail her nothing. If her conquests were to prove profitable, she would be forced to make terms with the rest of the world. Without wool, cotton, rubber, hides, vegetable oils, and a host of other products, she could not become again a great manufacturing nation or turn to account the resources of the lands which she had overrun. "Without a free sea, no internal industry can bring national wealth."

Not only was Germany cut off from the sea, but the nations which alone could supply her with the necessary raw materials in sufficient quantity were in arms against her. In the year 1913 she imported from overseas more than £122,000,000 worth of cotton, wool, copper, skins, and hides, iron ore, nitrates, silk, rubber, and linseed. Should the Allies so will it, not a single pfennig's worth of these necessary commodities could enter Germany, no matter what conquests her armies might make. Thus, even in the unlikely event of Germany's success by land, the Allies would still be masters of the situation. So long as they retained their sea-power they could cripple her for all time, and turn her battle glories into Dead Sea fruit.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." Germany had staked her all upon the capacity of her armies to overwhelm her foes in a short, sharp war of a few months' duration. Before she had even trodden down Belgium, the British Navy had contained her fleets and doomed her to a long period of strife. Its grasp was at her throat, and as the years of bloodshed and horror lengthened out, the bitter truth dawned upon her that never could she satisfy her lust for dominion by force of arms on land. She was powerless on the sea, and it is by sea power that nations in the long run prevail.

CHAPTER II.

THE GERMAN RETREAT TO THE VESLE.

IN the final chapter of our ninth volume I sketched the course of events which led to the German retreat from the Marne. The sudden and dramatic blow which Marshal Foch struck on the Western side of the "pocket" was no hasty effort of despair, but the beginning of a long-thought-out series of offensives which gathered strength day by day, and involved the whole line from the south of Verdun to the marshes of the Yser. For more than two hard-fought months it continued, and the advance only slowed down when the Germans reached the positions from which they had sprung forward on 21st March. By the middle of September they had lost all their gains of the earlier part of the year, and had announced that thereafter they would only fight on the defensive. They had no other choice.

While the Allies were retreating before the great German onsets in the spring and summer of the year, arm-chair strategists impatiently asked, "Where are the reserves? If they exist, why are they not flung into the battle?" Foch was far wiser than his critics. He recalled the old French proverb, "Everything comes at last to the man who knows how to wait," and he possessed his soul in wonderful patience. As you know, his plan was to meet the enemy's thrusts with the minimum of men for the purpose, and bide his time until he was ready to set his armies in motion all along the line. Patience in defence and vigour in attack—these were the Marshal's crowning virtues. For the first time he was able to regard the Allied forces as one mighty army, and dispose of the various corps according to his own plan. The "united command" which

American Troops in Action on the Ourcq Front.

(*By permission of The Illustrated London News.*)

The attack on Meurcy Farm near Fère-en-Tardenois, leading up to the capture of Seringes.

had been so long in coming had justified itself in the most remarkable manner. It had given the Allies the upper hand, and had enabled them to rain a succession of heavy blows upon the enemy while he was embarrassed on the Tardenois plateau. The result was seen all the way from the Vosges to the North Sea.

I must now tell you the story of the first of the Allied offensives in greater detail. It was on 18th July that General Mangin began that attack on the western side of the salient which forced the Germans from the Marne and ushered in two months of Allied victory. A French writer gives us the following graphic picture of his advance :—

"The night before the attack was stormy; tremendous thunderclaps, huge, illuminating flashes of sheet-lightning, and cataracts of rain preceded the offensive. The heavens themselves tried to 'camouflage' our last preparations. Suddenly, at half-past four, the signal for attack went up, and the Franco-American troops advanced. They had been gone but ten minutes when the first prisoners came running in. . . . At certain points prudence was required. It was impossible, for instance, to deliver a frontal attack upon the plateau towards Dommiers. There the position was surrounded. Moreover, it had been necessary to cross the Savières, to flounder about in marshes, and to cross a deep ravine; but from this moment onward the advance became more rapid.

"So quickly did it go that one of the French airmen who had been shot down within the German lines had hardly time to hide himself within a small wood before he was rescued by the advancing French troops. Another proof of the swiftness of our advance was the silence of the enemy's artillery. A hundred artillerymen were captured before they were able to load their guns. In the deep ravine of Saconin we reaped a fine harvest of heavy and field guns. . . .

"Meanwhile news was arriving at the headquarters of General Mangin, which consisted only of a flag placed at the foot of an oak, from which he followed the French advance through his glasses. Villages were falling one after another like houses of cards. By every road, along every path, across the wheat fields, long lines of gray uniforms were flowing in. They were the Kaiser's soldiers surrendering in groups of forty, fifty, a hundred. Here two regimental staffs were captured in bed; there a camp was surrounded before the sentries had even time to cry 'Who goes there?' Farther off, Americans were galloping round the country overtaking the enemy, now retreating in panic."

On the first day of the assault the all-important main road from Soissons to the Marne and to the eastern face of the salient was rendered impassable by the enemy, and by the evening of the 19th Mangin saw his troops in possession of

the heights overlooking Soissons from the south. As he watched his shells bursting over the railway junction through which every gun and shell from the German bases had to pass into the salient, he heaved a sigh of relief. M. Clemenceau, the French Premier, who was with him, shook him warmly by the hand, and a few hours later told his friends in Paris that he had just left the happiest man in the world. That night the Germans beyond the Marne began to retrace their steps, with de Mitry's French Colonials hard at their heels.

The Germans had crossed the river on the previous Monday morning, but had never been able to advance beyond the hills overlooking the river from the south. None of those who lived to recross the stream will ever forget the five terrible days which they spent south of the Marne. Everywhere the ground which they held was overlooked by the French and American artillery observers. Enclosed in a narrow space between the hills and the river, they offered an excellent target for the Allied guns. They could only bring food and munitions across the Marne bridges with the greatest difficulty; for shells constantly fell upon the transports, and bombs were unceasingly dropped from the skies. The enemy found himself in much the same position as the Austrians on the Italian bank of the Piave in the month of June.

Try to imagine the situation. Eighty thousand men, with their guns and innumerable wheeled vehicles, had to cross a broad river by pontoon bridges, on which they could only march two abreast, while the French guns upon the heights rained death and destruction upon them, and Allied airmen assailed them from above with bombs and bullets. Most of the invaders were withdrawn under cover of night and dense clouds of smoke; but during the hours of daylight the slaughter was terrible. A correspondent writing on Sunday evening, 21st July, said:—

"There is not a single German on the south bank of the Marne, or rather not a single living German. Under our victorious pressure they have had to recross the stream in disorder and panic. And they have not done so without leaving heaps of dead behind, and without losing prisoners. . . . Night and day our bombing planes and British aeroplanes stopped or impeded the passages across the stream. The enemy came to his decision to retreat on Friday evening, and at all the crossing points

great clouds of smoke were sent up to mask the movement. These clouds gave us the alarm; and our guns on Friday night and Saturday, working at double pressure, made hecatombs of the retreating Boches. It is estimated that they lost half their number."

In the early hours of that same Sunday morning French troops belonging to General Dégoutte's army entered Château-Thierry. So hastily had the enemy retired that German uniforms, hats, bayonets, and rifles were found in heaps. Many women and children had lain hidden in cellars during the occupation. One girl, who was asked why she did not quit the town before the Germans entered, said, "I could not leave my mother; and, besides, why should I retreat from the Germans?" The inhabitants were overjoyed to see their rescuers, but there was little time for greetings; every soldier was eager to follow up the enemy, and the streets were ringing with the clatter of French cavalry and armoured cars as they dashed through the streets in hot pursuit.

By this time the enemy had distributed his rearguards all round the salient, and was fighting for time in which to withdraw his heavy guns and munitions from the fatal pocket. North of the Ourcq Mangin lay along the highroad, and south of that river Dégoutte's troops were nearing the road. On the other side of the salient Berthelot was holding his ground, and the British, under General Godley, were making progress on both banks of the Ardre. There was stiff resistance on the 22nd, but the pinching of the salient continued on the west, the east, and the south. The same day the Americans entered Jaulgonne, and immediately pressed forward into the Forest of Fère. By the evening of the 24th Mangin was six miles east of Soissons, and had captured Oulchy-le-Château, the most important place on the road to Fère. The small town, which is perched on the edge of a ridge parallel to the course of the river, had been a great German storehouse, and much material was seized when it fell into French hands. The pressure from the south still continued, and on the 25th Gouraud won back all his old positions east of Rheims.

Next day Foch brought up reinforcements, and assailed the enemy all round the salient with renewed vigour. The German rearguards now began to fall back rapidly. Next day French troops fought their way into Fère. The little market town, with its old-world streets and turreted gateways, was the scene

of very hard fighting. All roads in the Tardenois plateau lead to Fère. The Germans had accumulated in the town vast stores of material and about a quarter of a million infantry. Everywhere the roads were thronged with vehicles, and movement was very difficult. So long as the Germans were pushing southward to the Marne the difficulty was not greatly felt. When, however, the railway near Soissons was cut, and the roads converging upon the two most important places in the salient—Fère and Ville—were under the fire of French guns, the roads had not only to supply the forces defending the salient, but had to permit the retirement of artillery and vehicles at the same time that reinforcements were pressing forward in the contrary direction. The confusion must have been awful; yet the success of the retreat shows that the Germans were able to bring order out of chaos.

Fère was defended stubbornly, and it held out so long that people at home began to imagine that the German retreat would end in its neighbourhood. The actual attack upon the place was made by French troops, Americans meanwhile clearing the fortified villages to the east. The van of the pursuit approached the town shortly after dawn on Sunday, 28th July, and found it strongly occupied by a rearguard prepared to fight to the bitter end. The leading French troops were held in check until their supports arrived. Then began a long and bitter struggle from house to house and street to street.* Bayonet, rifle, and machine gun were busy all day; hand-to-hand struggles were frequent, but by evening the town was cleared. The remnant of the garrison, finding the bridges destroyed, floundered through the Ourcq, and sought protection behind the troops lining the north bank of the river. Our indomitable Allies, however, plunged into the water, and followed up their success with such vigour that by nightfall they had established themselves on the enemy's side of the stream.

On the same day Americans advanced with great spirit to the east of Fère. They waded the Ourcq near Sergy early in the morning, but were forced to retire to the south bank by German machine guns, and wait until their artillery arrived to prepare the way. This done, they pressed on to Sergy and Seringes, both of which places were captured. Later on the Germans began a series of violent counter-attacks which lasted

* See illustration, pp. 24–25.

for days. The 4th Guards Division, fresh from a long rest, was flung against the Americans four times ; but the Prussians could make but little headway. The enemy hoped that his crack troops would make short work of the " Yanks," but in the end they were so severely punished that they were forced to retire with very heavy losses. Captured Guardsmen said that one of their companies had only ten men left, and of these seven were taken prisoners.

How fierce the fighting was may be gathered from the fact that Sergy changed hands nine times before it finally fell to the Americans. Never once throughout several days did the struggle slacken. Every foot of ground was won at a fearful cost. Every man fought for his life, and no prisoners were taken. In the village the victors discovered that their wounded had been bayoneted, and that machine guns had been mounted in a building over which flew the Red Cross flag.

Equally fierce was the struggle for Seringes, in the rear of which the enemy had massed his troops for a counter-attack after he had been ejected from the place. He put down a heavy barrage behind the American lines, so as to cut off the advanced troops from their supports. When the order was given for the supports to advance through this zone of death, not a man hesitated. Their determination was splendid. One American who had been wounded in the head, and had been told at the dressing-station to wait for an ambulance, was found to be missing. Later on he was discovered unconscious by the side of the road. He had struggled towards the firing-line, and had only been prevented from joining his comrades by physical weakness. Another American who was acting as a runner " carried on " although shot in the hand and the toes.

On that red Sunday, 28th July, while Berthelot advanced up to the Rheims-Dormans road, Mangin, now reinforced by two British divisions, was heavily engaged near Buzancy, which was taken next day. The capture of this town was a great feather in the cap of the Scots division fighting with the French. It was this division—the famous 51st—which saved Arras during the critical hours of 28th March. Buzancy was stormed with an almost unequalled courage and coolness, and the fighting in the streets was extremely violent. The houses were packed with enemy machine guns, and many Germans had taken refuge behind a high wall which had not been knocked down by our

French Troops forcing the Retiring

(From the picture by D. Macpherson

This little market-town on the Ourcq is the most important road centre of the Tardenois plateau, an
from the Marne they clung to it with great tenacity. The actual attack upon Fère was made by Frenc
to house. The above illustration gives an excellent idea of the manner in which the French captured th

Femy out of Fère-en-Tardenois.

l permission of The Sphere.)

tl Germans had congregated immense quantities of stores in the place. Consequently during the retreat
tops on 28th July. A bitter struggle ensued, and fighting was protracted from street to street and house
pce.

bombardment. The Scots climbed up on each other's shoulders, and dropped down on the other side in the face of a terrible fire. You may form some idea of the severity of the struggle when I tell you that at the end of the day two bodies were found locked together in death. One was that of a German officer holding in his hand the revolver with which he had killed his opponent ; the other was a Scot, whose bayonet had transfixed the officer. This kind of fighting went on everywhere.

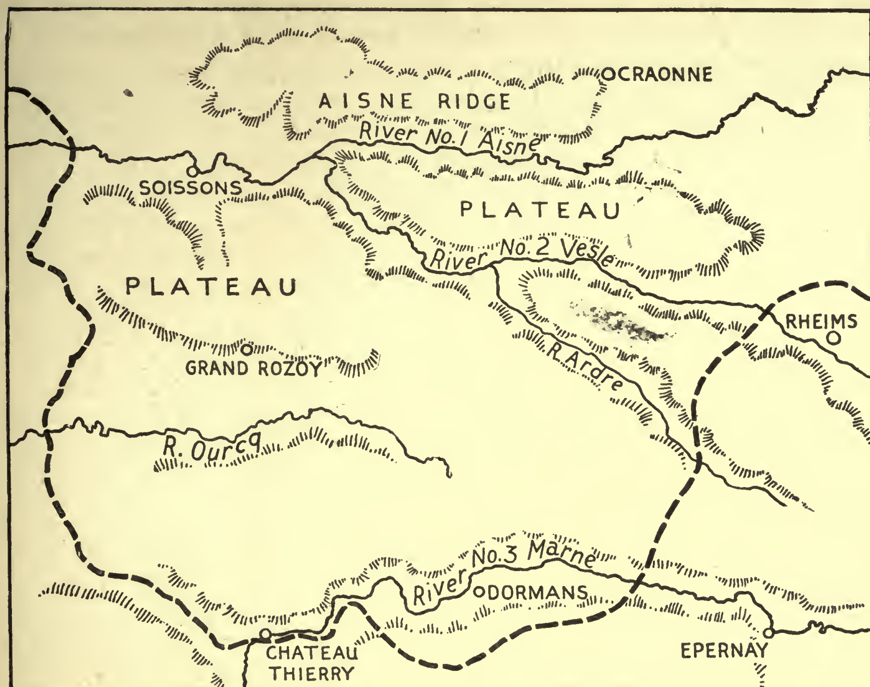
Royal Scots, King's Own Scottish Borderers, Black Watch, Gordons, Argylls, and Seaforths having won the village, held on to the position for three days, under a murderous enfilading fire, waiting for other divisions to come up. When the whole line went forward the Scots were again foremost in the fray, and their prowess won very high praise from General Mangin.

> "You came into the battle," he said, "at its fiercest moment. The enemy brought up against us his best divisions, in numbers superior to our own. You continued to advance foot by foot, in spite of his bitter resistance, and you held on to the conquered ground notwithstanding the violence of his counter-attacks. . . . All of you, both the young soldiers and the veterans of Flanders and Palestine, have shown the magnificent qualities of your race—indomitable courage and tenacity. You have won the admiration of your brothers in arms. Your country will be proud of you, for to you and to your commanders is due in large measure the victory which we have just gained against the barbarous enemies of all free peoples. I am happy to have you under my command, and I thank you."

Their French comrades were moved to such admiration that they raised a monument in memory of this fine feat of arms, which they declared to be "equal to the greatest in the war." A pyramid was constructed of stones from the ruined chateau of Buzancy, and upon it was placed a tablet carved with a thistle encircled by roses, and inscribed with the words : "Here the glorious thistle of Scotland will bloom for ever amidst the roses of France." After a week's hard fighting, the Scots, "having shaved in the open field," marched past the general and his staff with their pipers leading the way. In days to come many pilgrims from beyond the Tweed will visit Buzancy to rejoice in this noble tribute to those Highland Territorials who on many a battlefield have proved themselves second to none.

The 29th of July was a day of terribly fierce battle. In the early morning British and Americans went forward against

Grand Rozoy, which was a blazing mass of ruins. They carried the first lines and the woods east of the Soissons–Château-Thierry road and rushed the village, in spite of a harassing fire from machine guns. They were, however, checked in their attempt to capture Hill 205, the terraced ridge above the village. At 2.30 p.m. another assault was made. Our men had to advance over perfectly open ground, sloping gradually up to the enemy's position. In the most brilliant fashion



Map to illustrate Successive Stages of the Retreat.

they pushed up the slopes, and having gained the woods and some of the more important heights, held on like bull-dogs to their gains. They had not won the hill, but had gained a footing on it.

On the following day Godley's troops on the eastern side of the salient had to bear the brunt of very fierce counter-attacks. On both sides of the Paris-Fismes railway there was very determined fighting on the 31st; but the German rear-guards, though they struggled with all the energy of despair,

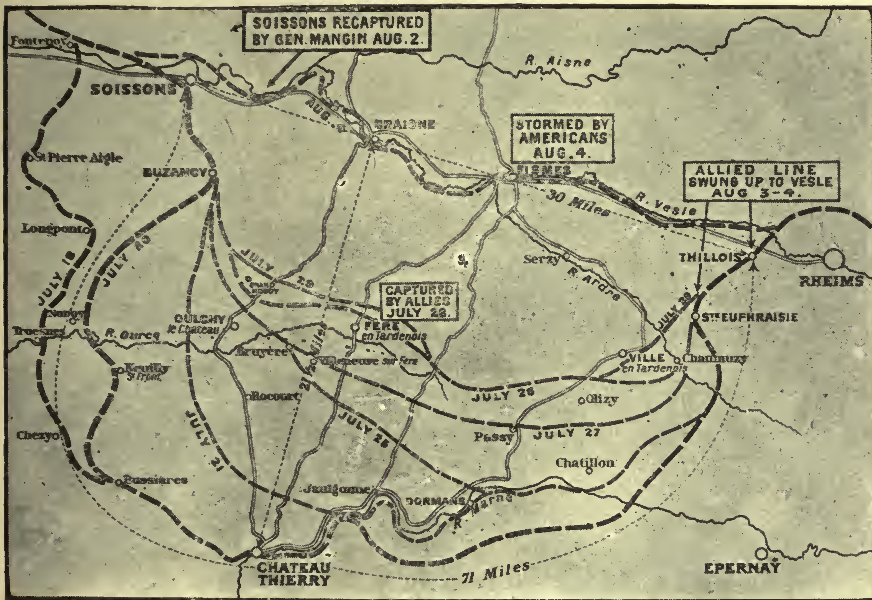
could not hold their own. For a fortnight, since Mangin's success on 18th July, they had been forced back from position to position. Reinforcements had been thrown into the salient to check the rate of retirement, and also, perhaps, to try to pluck success out of defeat. By the evening of Wednesday, 31st July, the enemy was in the following position: he held a bare, high plateau to the east of the deep ravine through which flows the brook Crise. The Allies stood on the western side of this ravine, which ends to the south of Soissons. As long as he held the plateau he covered Soissons on the south-east, and prevented us from looking northwards to the Vesle and the Aisne.

To the north-east the plateau breaks up into high, bare, rolling country, which forms the watershed between the Vesle and the Ourcq. This watershed was in the enemy's hands. Hill 205, on which we had recently gained a footing, stands just where the plateau merges into the watershed. It is the key position of the whole region, and, once we were firmly established upon it, we could overlook the gradual descent to the valley of the Vesle, only five or six miles away at its nearest point. In clear weather we could even see the taller buildings of Fismes. All the roads by which the enemy could retreat—to Braisne, to Bazoches, to Fismes, and to the three river crossings—could clearly be seen. When the hill finally passed into our possession, on 1st August, the Germans were forced to abandon the watershed and fall back to the Vesle. By Friday, 2nd August, all the higher part of the slope down towards the Vesle—a belt from two to three miles broad—was occupied by the Allies—French, British, Americans, and Italians.

This retirement uncovered Soissons. At six on the evening of 2nd August a detachment of French cavalry clattered into the square, and less than three hours later General Mangin was able to telephone to Paris the glad news that the old city had been recaptured. With Soissons gone there was no line for the enemy to hold save the limestone heights to the north of the Vesle. These heights are not continuous, and towards Rheims they were under the flanking fire of the Allies. It was clear that they could but afford him a temporary resting-place, and that sooner or later he would be obliged to seek refuge behind the Aisne.

By the evening of 3rd August Mangin had occupied the left bank of the Aisne from Soissons to Venizel. Early on the

morning of the 4th, Americans waded across the Vesle to the west of Fismes under machine-gun fire from the lower slopes of the heights lining the stream on the north side, and from artillery further back. The German rearguards in the streets and houses fought desperately for a time, but at last broke and fled. As they ran towards the river the American machine gunners took a heavy toll of them. With the capture of Fismes and the swinging up of the Allied line on the eastern side of the salient to the right bank of the Vesle, the Second Battle of the Marne may be said to have ended.



The Natural Obstacles to the Retreat.

The pocket that stretched southward to the Marne had been wiped out by a series of remarkable victories. The numbers engaged on the Allied side had not been over great ; there had been no attempt to break the enemy's lines ; the whole object of the counter-offensive was to force the Germans into a costly withdrawal. This had now been done ; but you must not suppose that the retreat was a rout. On the contrary, it was managed most skilfully. Though the Allies captured many thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns, the enemy saved his armies, and that at a time of great peril when he was caught

British Troops driving Germans out of the Village of Grand Rozoy.

(*Drawn specially for The Graphic by Louis Raemaekers, and reproduced by permission.*)

unawares. His whole line of retreat was marked by dense clouds of smoke and loud explosions as he burnt the material and fired the ammunition dumps which he could not remove. Nevertheless, he withdrew his troops gradually, and saved the bulk of his men, guns, and vehicles. When you consider the narrow space in which his army was penned, the few and bad roads at his disposal, the ever-increasing pressure on the west, east, and south, the awful havoc created by the Allied airmen as they assailed the retiring columns with bombs and machine-gun fire, you cannot but admire the skill with which the German generals conducted the retreat. But though the enemy had escaped from a trap of his own making, he had so hopelessly failed in his offensive that German confidence in ultimate victory suffered a rude shock. For four months the German armies had won success after success, and the nation had been buoyed up with the expectation of speedy victory. In the midst of their elation came a very serious reverse, and for the first time they realized that the beginning of the end had come.

* * * * * * *

With the German retreat across the Vesle the Second Battle of the Marne entered upon its final stage. It is estimated that the Crown Prince flung into the fight at least seventy-two divisions, ten of which were withdrawn from Prince Rupprecht's army facing the British forces under Marshal Haig. The losses in killed and wounded were very heavy. Over 40,000 prisoners were captured, besides hundreds of guns of all sizes, thousands of machine guns, and a vast amount of stores and ammunition. As the news of the defeat became known in Germany men's hearts failed them from fear, and even the most sanguine felt their hope of victory on the battlefield ebbing fast away.

The far-reaching results of this battle will occupy several of our future chapters. On 3rd August, while the 51st Division was descending from the heights of Grand Rozoy, the Germans abandoned Albert, and drew back behind the Ancre. Next day they made a more important withdrawal on the Avre, and near Montdidier. They had borrowed from Peter to pay Paul, and in consequence had been forced to shorten their lines. At daybreak on 8th August—only three days after they had begun a strong resistance on the line of the Vesle—the British Fourth

Army went forward, followed next day by the whole of the French First Army. Thus began a series of Allied advances. Blow upon blow was struck all the way from the Yser marches to the south of Verdun. Without pause the Allies continued to gain ground, until by the closing days of September the Germans were back on the line from which they had advanced with such high hopes on 21st March.

* * * * * * *

Strange, indeed, was Ludendorff's explanation of the retreat. He announced that, Foch's attempt to break through having ended in failure, he was enabled to withdraw his troops to the north bank of the Marne "for fresh and more important tasks." This bald and unconvincing statement fell upon German ears like a death-knell. The fifth great offensive had been trumpeted throughout Germany as "the peace offensive." Now the poor deluded people were informed that all it had achieved was to prevent the French from breaking through. They believed themselves on the crest of a wave of victory, but, lo and behold, they were in the trough, on the defensive! Their confidence in their High Command was well-nigh shattered, and when the Allies followed up their success by forcing even greater retreats along the whole battle-line, depression grew apace. Before many weeks had passed the Kaiser must have begun to picture himself in Satan's plight—

> "Deposed,
> Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
> A spectacle of ruin or of scorn."

CHAPTER III.

THE SALONIKA ARMY.

FOR very many pages of this record you have heard nothing of the Allied forces which had their base at Salonika. I must now bring the story of the Salonika army up to date. First let me remind you of the reasons which induced France and Britain to send troops to this much-coveted port. Early in the year 1915 Venizelos, the Greek Premier, suggested that the Allies might make it a base for operations against Turkey and Bulgaria. Though it was neutral territory it was united with Serbia by treaty, and therefore might be occupied. Venizelos intended that the Greek army should join the Allies at Salonika, and he began to mobilize the national forces for this purpose. The Allies accepted his invitation, and troops were landed in October 1915. Then, however, King Constantine intervened. He illegally drove Venizelos from power, and while the Allies were landing at Salonika, refused to co-operate with them.

At first only a few British and French divisions occupied the port. After the combined attack of Germans, Austrians, and Bulgars on Serbia in October 1915, the Serbian army was forced to retreat across the mountains to the coast of Albania. After a terrible march, during which not only many soldiers, but thousands of the boys who accompanied them, died of hunger and exposure, the remnants reached the sea, where the ships of the Allies were waiting to receive them. In Chapter XXX. of our sixth volume I told you the story of this retreat. You will remember that the Serbians were carried to Corfu, where they were rested and re-fitted, and were afterwards taken to Salonika. There they were joined by Russian and Italian troops, also by one or two Greek divisions raised by Venizelos.

The King of Greece (second from right) on the British Front in Macedonia.

(*Official photograph.*)

King Alexander of Greece early in the year 1918 visited various sectors of the British line in the Balkans. On the Struma front he was welcomed by the British Commander-in-Chief, and a review was held in his honour. He spent a week in Salonika inspecting barracks, camps, and

The story of the Salonika army from October 1915 down to the end of December 1916 may be told in six chapters. The first chapter recounts the determined but unsuccessful attempt by the French, supported on the flank by a British division, to join hands with the retreating Serbians. The attempt failed; the French were forced to fall back to Salonika, and this meant that the British on their flank had to retreat also. (See Vol. V., pp. 27–30.) The second chapter is entirely concerned with the creation of a great "entrenched camp" covering the port. You will find a description of this camp on page 30 of our sixth volume.

The third chapter relates how the Allied troops gradually moved towards the Greek frontier, and there established a line from which they might advance against the enemy, or which they might hold in case of an attack. This advance meant much building of roads, bridges, and railways, as the country was utterly devoid of all means of communication. The line was complete at the end of June 1916. The events of the next two months fall into the fourth chapter, which describes how the Bulgars advanced on both flanks, and reached Lake Ostrovo in the west and Kavala in the east.

Then the fifth chapter opens. The Bulgars made an offensive in the west, but were thrust back, and the Allies advanced triumphantly and recaptured Monastir. (See Chapter XXX., Vol. VI.) The British, meanwhile, were engaged in making holding attacks and in winning local positions. The sixth chapter tells the tale of winter stagnation. Deep mud forced us to call a halt and wait, with what patience we could command, for the spring. The interval was occupied in preparations for a new offensive. Thus the year 1916 came to an end.

Not until March 1917 were the roads sufficiently dry to permit an advance. At this time the Salonika army was in its highest state of efficiency. Reinforcements and drafts had been received during the winter, and new roads had been constructed, one especially in the loop of the Cerna round the hills to the east of Monastir. (See map, p. 347, Vol. VI.) On 11th March the French attacked between the Lakes Prespa and Ochrida, in the hope of capturing Resne, at the north end of Lake Prespa. At the same time a converging attack was to be made northwards from Monastir against a commanding hill. Local successes were obtained, but no great headway was made.

On 24th April it was the turn of the British to attack. The enemy held a cluster of steep hills and a ridge with a series of little hillocks known as "Pip Ridge." One of the steep hills resembles a fortress of the Middle Ages. Our men called it "The Dub." "Go where you will, that blunt, bald-browed head is looking at you. Quite a long way back from the fighting line, as you go up a ravine that apparently is open to nothing but the sky, you will find the road screened by an artificial hedge, or marked 'For use by night only.' Should you ask why, you will be told that it is under observation from the Dub. The Dub is the strongest point of the enemy's third and main line of defence. Its twin height is a mile nearer Lake Doiran, and of proportions only slightly less. Both these hills are conical in shape, with steep, barren sides. The white scars of the Bulgar trenches stretch across them like a girdle, and the humps of the long, rampart-like 'Pip Ridge' are strongly fortified." It was this position which the British were now about to attack.

After two days' bombardment our men went forward on the night of 24th April. The ground over which they had to advance was specially difficult on the right, where a steep and rocky ravine separated our trenches from those of the enemy. About 9.15, half an hour before the attack was timed to begin, the Bulgars, who from the first had heavier artillery than we possessed, opened a barrage along our whole front, which they illuminated with powerful searchlights. Nevertheless our men pressed on gallantly, and everywhere entered the enemy's line, only to be driven out again by the heavy fire which the Bulgars opened on them. The result of the night's fighting was that we won on the left 1,500 yards of the enemy's trenches, and held them against four counter-attacks. On the right our troops were obliged to fall back to their original lines.

After a fortnight's lull we were ready for another attempt. As daylight faded from the sky on 8th May we began our final bombardment of the enemy's line. The enemy was thoroughly roused, and his searchlights and star-shells lighted up the scene. At the hour fixed our first wave went over the top, and moved across the shell-pounded ground. The result was a repetition of 25th April. We entered the enemy's line, but could not stay in it. The position was too strong for us. Elsewhere, too, the Allies experienced the same misfortune.

Nowhere was it found possible to drive a wedge into the Bulgar front.

The spring campaigning season was now drawing to a close. We could not reach the hills in front before the unhealthy summer began, and we were now forced to fall back to the hills in our rear, or suffer the same heavy sick-list as in previous years. To deceive the enemy we attacked some of his advanced trenches on 15th May. Meanwhile we were moving our men to the rear, leaving only a series of fortified bridgeheads, which could be quickly reinforced if the enemy attempted to seize them. The Bulgar, however, was quite as well aware of the unhealthiness of the plain as we were. He put out placards: "We know you are going back to the hills; so are we." Through the summer the only forces that held the plain in strength were the mosquitoes, whose armies numbered thousands of millions.

In Chapter XXXI. of our sixth volume I told you the story of Constantine's treachery. During the spring and summer of 1917 he did not attack us, but always seemed to be on the point of doing so. He was waiting until he could reap the corn crop of Thessaly. We had blockaded his coasts, and there was a shortage of bread. Once, however, the Thessalian harvest was garnered he would be independent of foreign supplies for seven or eight months, and would be in a position to give effective help to his brother-in-law the Kaiser. The French High Command at Salonika united with Venizelos in urging that the Allies should occupy Thessaly and seize the corn crop, after paying, of course, the full price to the farmers. This was done, and though the Greek reservists threatened resistance, the firm attitude of the French commander prevented any serious fighting. Greeks hidden amongst the standing corn fired on the French troops, but were nearly all shot down; and thereafter the reaping of the harvest was carried out peacefully. Volo, Larissa, and other towns were occupied, while the Royalist Greeks, "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike," looked on.

I need not tell you over again the story of Constantine's deposition. You can refresh your memory by reading Chapter XXXIV. of our seventh volume. In June 1917 we knew that before long we should have the assistance of a Greek army.

Between June and the close of the year 1917 there was no

Homeless People of Salonika camping out after the Fire.

(*French official photograph.*)

The Salonika fire broke out on the afternoon of Saturday, August 18, 1917, and lasted until it burned itself out on the following Tuesday. The place boasted no fire-engines capable of coping with the fire, and away from the sea front there was a shortage of water. Beginning in the Jewish quarter in the north-west of the town, it burned its way across to the harbour front, which by midnight on Saturday was a blazing expanse of flame. The homeless people were taken by the Allied soldiers to the outskirts of the city. Fortunately few lives were lost.

forward movement on the Allied front. A state of deadlock had set in ; neither side could pierce the defences of the other. Until the Greek army was ready to reinforce us we could only mark time.

On 18th August a great fire broke out in Salonika, and raged for more than two days. The commercial quarter, which lies within the white walls of the town to the north-west, was destroyed, and some 70,000 persons were rendered homeless. Most of the older houses were fragile wooden structures, coated with lime or mud, and these burned furiously. Happily the loss of life was small.

I now come to the year 1918. Up to the last week of May there was no movement of any consequence in the Balkans. A new spirit, however, was growing up in Greece ; the army was rapidly becoming efficient, and was eager to face the hated Bulgars. It had its opportunity on 30th May, when, during bad weather, a combined French and Greek attack was made upon very strong enemy positions on the Skra di Legen, a few miles west of the Vardar, near the Serbian border. The battle opened with the usual fierce bombardment, and at the first rush the French and Greeks advanced one and a quarter miles on a front of seven and a half miles, and carried the first enemy position. Strong counter-attacks were beaten off, and more than fifteen hundred prisoners were taken, including thirty-three officers. Meanwhile the British and Serbians in the Doiran region bombarded the enemy's positions for two days, and cut gaps in the wire, after which successful raids were made.

Early in June there was fighting in Albania. For two years past the Italians had maintained a force in this country, based on the port of Valona. It held a line which ran along the Vojusa river, and thence to Koritza, where it linked up with the left wing of the French army in Macedonia.* Three strong columns with cavalry and horse artillery operated along the coastal region, where it was supported by British monitors and aeroplanes. Early in June the French stormed Kamia Mountain, which rises for 7,000 feet, and dominates the approaches to the Skumbi river, which you will see rising on the northern slopes of Kamia. After securing their flanks, the French paused until 6th July, when French and Italian troops moved

* See map, p. 40.

northward from Valona, and north-eastward from the Vojusa towards the Tomorica valley, in the hope of opening up a fresh line of communication between the Adriatic Sea and Serbia, and thus threatening the right flank and rear of the Bulgarian army covering the approaches to Uskub and Monastir. From the sea British monitors shelled the enemy positions, and after a stubborn battle, lasting three days, the Italian cavalry broke through on the left wing. They entered Fieri on the 8th, and took the Austrians by surprise. Few of them escaped, for the Italian cavalry cut them off as they tried to retreat north of the

Map to illustrate the Allied Advance and Retreat in Albania.

Semeni river. An aerodrome was discovered intact, with several aeroplanes on the ground. Just as the Italians seized it, an enemy aviator, not knowing what had happened, landed in the aerodrome. The machine contained an Austrian and four ladies. Berat, fifty miles from Durazzo, was occupied on the 10th; numerous villages were captured, and 2,000 prisoners were taken. "Our operations," said a French report, "were carried out with troops much smaller in number than those of the enemy. Our attacks succeeded, thanks to perfect preparations and to the bravery of our men, who during fighting, sometimes in the

snow and sometimes under a broiling sun in a difficult country, showed themselves superior to the enemy both in skill and in courage." At the close of the month it seemed likely that the Skumbi valley would soon be occupied and Durazzo seized before its Austrian garrison could be reinforced.

The hopes of the Allies, however, were not yet to be realized. On 22nd August the Austrians, considerably reinforced, took the offensive. The Italians and French had pushed forward with insufficient troops to fortify and garrison the ground which they had won. Much of the line had to be held by Albanian irregulars, who gave way before the Austrian onset. The consequence was that the Allies were forced to retire for more than twelve miles to the Malakastra ridge, a strong natural position which they held before their advance to the Semeni river. It was from this ridge that the Austrians formerly looked down upon Avlona, which was commanded by their guns.

Thus with an advance and a subsequent retreat the story of the Albanian fighting down to the end of August draws to a close. In a subsequent chapter we shall learn that in the third week of September the Allies made a great advance between the Cerna and the north of Lake Ostrovo and broke the Bulgar resistance. By this time Greece had 200,000 soldiers fit for war, and was prepared to raise another 100,000 if arms and equipment could be obtained from Great Britain or France.

* * * * * * *

Disappointed people at home constantly asked, "Why has not the Salonika army done more?" Let me explain. First of all, you must remember that the Allies reached Salonika too late. Had they arrived in July 1915 they might have reinforced the Serbian army, and enabled it to resist the overwhelming attack of the Germans, Austrians, and Bulgars. But, as you know, the Allies did not appear in force until October, when Serbia was already lost and the remnants of the Serbian army were in retreat. Further, the Allies dared not advance until they were secure from attack by the Greeks. Not until the deposition of Constantine and the restoration to power of Venizelos were they certain that they would not be assailed by the Greeks, who lay on their rear and all round them.

The country over which we had to advance was about as bad as it possibly could be. Mr. Ward Price, the correspondent

with the British army, and the writer of the excellent book* from which I have gathered most of the facts set out in this chapter, tells us that outside Salonika the country was " a mother-naked land," a treeless, uncultivated region of rugged hills and deep valleys, with only two roads and three single-line railways, which entered the enemy's country at widely-separated points. Before we could push forward we had to make roads and railways, build bridges and piers, and import almost all the material needed for the purpose. Then, too, the climate put grave obstacles in our way. A few short weeks of spring and autumn were alone fit for campaigning.

Though much was not directly achieved, the Salonika army played its part in bringing the enemy's Balkan plans to naught. Mr. Price tells us that, if the Allies had not occupied Salonika, the Germans would have overrun the whole of the Balkans, and Greece would have been added to the number of our foes. A submarine base would have been established at Salonika, which would have been turned into a Mediterranean Kiel.

Further, the Allies held up a large force of Bulgars which might have been utilized in other theatres of war. The Bulgar army, which numbered from forty thousand to fifty thousand men, was gripped tightly. Then, too, we gave back Monastir to the Serbs, and thus enabled them to gain a footing in their own land. Though the bulk of Serbia still remained in the hands of the Bulgars, the Serbs could claim some of their own territory, and this kept them together as a nation and encouraged them to persevere.

I have told you in former chapters that one of the Kaiser's dreams was to establish German power in Asia. He hoped that the whole of the Balkans would be his, and that from Constantinople he would be able to push eastwards into Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. The little heroic kingdom of Serbia formed a barrier against his progress in this direction. Though he overran the country, the Salonika army prevented him from joining hands with Greece, and thus securing his flank in Asia Minor. So you see that in a variety of ways the Salonika army, though its record may appear disappointing, had justified itself.

* *With the Salonika Army,* by Ward Price.

CHAPTER IV.

FIGHTING IN PALESTINE.

IN Chapter IX. of our ninth volume I brought the story of the fighting in Palestine down to the close of the month of March 1918. You will remember that on the 22nd of that month our troops crossed the Jordan and fought their way eastward until they were only twelve or fifteen miles from the Hedjaz railway. General Allenby was eager to capture this railway, because it runs through the whole length of Palestine from Damascus to Maan, some sixty miles south of the Dead Sea, and forms not only an excellent line of communication, but the route by which reinforcements and supplies were sent to the Turks. It is known as the Hedjaz railway, because it is continued through Arabia to the city of Medina, in the province of Hedjaz. It was completed in 1908.

The railway was constructed for the purpose of affording an easy route for Mohammedan pilgrims in Turkey to visit the two holy cities of Arabia. The more important of them is Mecca, the birthplace of the prophet and the cradle of the Moslem faith. It lies 250 miles south of Medina, and is a place of the highest sanctity. Every good Mohammedan endeavours to make a pilgrimage to it at least once in his lifetime. When he has made this pilgrimage he is entitled to wear a green turban.

Unbelievers are not allowed to go into the city at all, but at different times a few Europeans have managed to enter it. One of these was the daring traveller Sir Richard Burton, who disguised himself as a pilgrim, and at the hazard of his life spent some time in the holy city. He tells us that Mecca is a handsome place of wide streets, and of lofty stone houses with numerous windows. At the time of the *hadj*, or annual pil-

grimage, it resembles an immense fair, at which are assembled Malays, Tartars, Persians, Arabians, Turks, Africans, and men of other Mohammedan races.

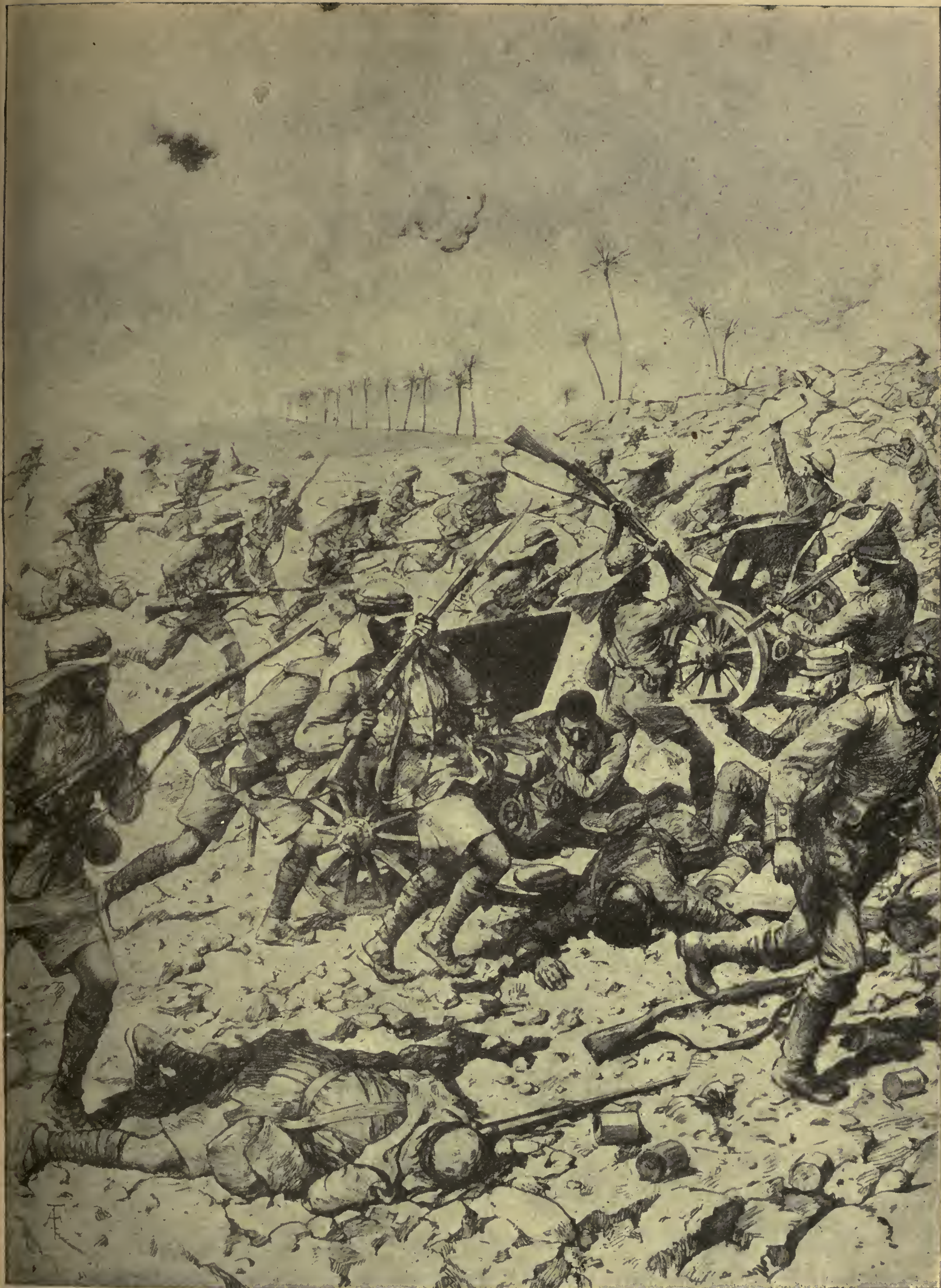
The most important mosque in the place encloses the Kaaba, a massive cubelike structure, said to have been founded by Abraham. Its four sides are covered with black silk, which is annually renewed at the time of the *hadj*. This covering, which is known as the "holy carpet," is sent every year from Cairo, and is carried in procession from Jedda, the port of Mecca, to the city. Openings in the silk are left to show two sacred stones. One of them is kissed by all pious pilgrims, who believe that by so doing their sins are forgiven and they are assured of Paradise.

Second only in sanctity to Mecca is Medina, the present terminus of the railway. It was to Medina that Mohammed fled when he was driven from the city of his birth on Friday, July 16, A.D. 622. From this date, which is known as the "Hegira," the Mohammedan era begins. Ten years later the prophet died, and his tomb is to be seen behind the flashing green dome of a beautiful mosque with four tall towers. True believers hold that the remains of Mohammed are contained in a silver coffin covered with marble, and miraculously suspended in mid-air between heaven and earth.

* * * * * * *

At Amman the Hedjaz railway is only twenty-five miles distant from the Jordan, and at this point the Turks had constructed formidable defences covering the railway station. If General Allenby could secure Amman, he would be able to cut off Maan and Medina, at both of which places there were strong Turkish garrisons. As you already know, Arab irregulars belonging to the army of the King of Hedjaz were fighting with us. They were divided into two forces, each commanded by a son of the king. Constant raids were made on the railway, which was frequently interrupted south of Maan. North of that place, however, Turkish patrols prevented the line from being destroyed, though the Arabs more than once broke through the outer defences of Maan, and even reached the railway station.

Allenby made two attempts to reach Amman during the month of March, but both of them were unsuccessful. On the night of 25th March he seized Es Salt after a stubborn



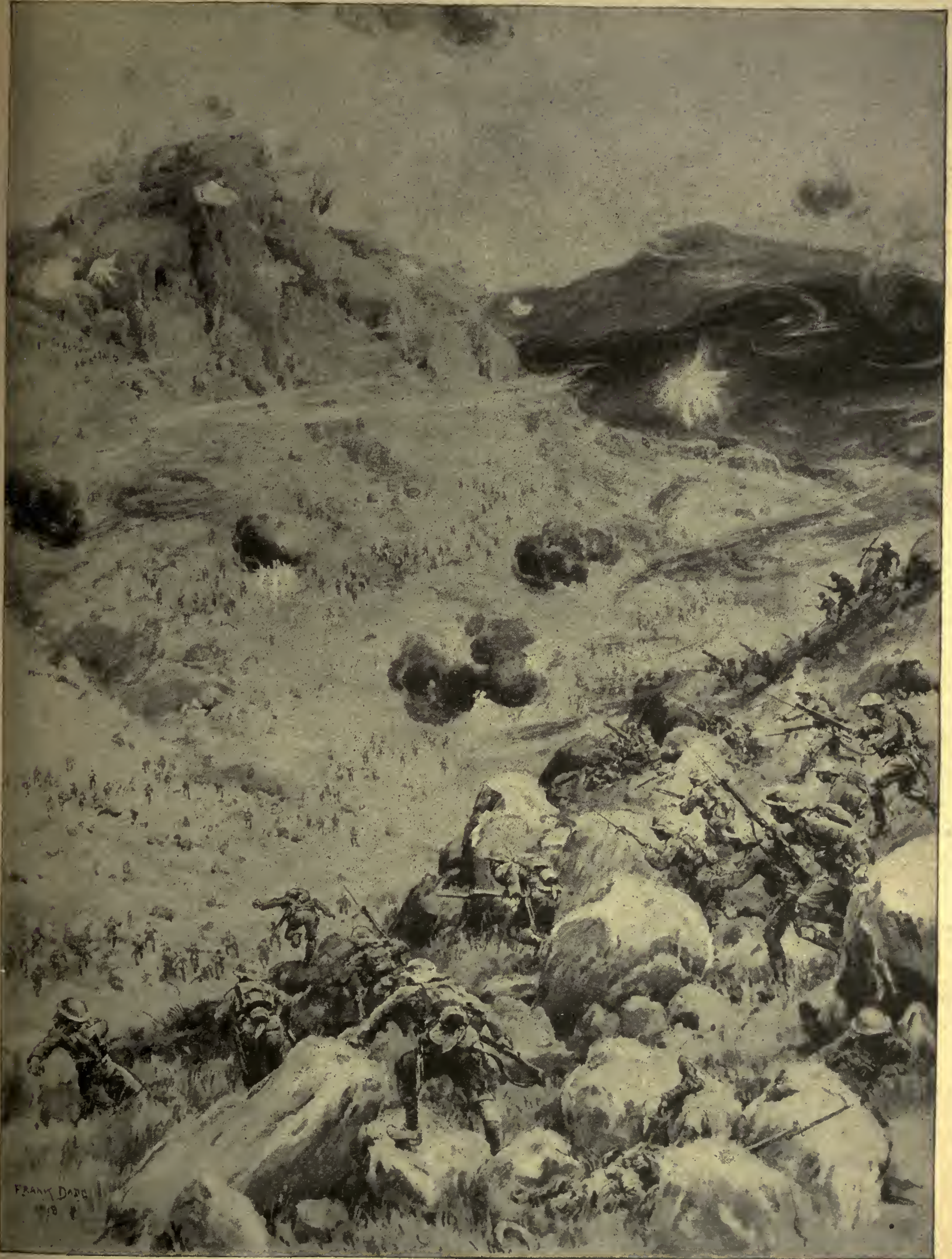
A Victorious Charge by the Hedjaz Troops.
(*By permission of The Illustrated London News.*)

resistance. Next day our mounted troops pushed on towards Amman, and by the evening of the 27th were within a mile of the town. As the enemy was discovered to be strongly entrenched in and around the place, General Allenby thought it wise to withdraw to Es Salt, after his cavalry had destroyed a part of the railway. On 1st April he retired from Es Salt and recrossed the Jordan. During the fighting between 25th March and 1st April 700 prisoners and four guns were captured. A small Turkish force ventured to attack our rearguard during the withdrawal, but it was easily repulsed.

On the morning of 11th April a strong Turkish attack was made upon our Jordan bridgehead, which was held by the Australian Light Horse. Thanks to our artillery, the Turkish forces were shattered before they could reach our lines. The enemy fell back, and was pursued by the Light Horse for six miles along the road to Es Salt.

General Allenby's second attempt to capture the Hedjaz railway was made on 30th April. The Turks had taken up a strong position, barring the mountain pass leading directly from our bridgehead to Es Salt. They were very strongly posted in the pass, which is narrow and flanked by high hills that cannot be turned. After crossing the river the London division of infantry made a frontal attack on the position, while the Australians made a wide encircling movement so as to fall upon Es Salt from the north. On 1st May our cavalry entered the place, and captured 350 prisoners; but as the infantry could not make headway, General Allenby decided to withdraw his forces once more beyond Jordan. The retirement was complete by the evening of 3rd May. On the night of 30th April some four thousand Turks who had crossed the Jordan higher up fell upon our flank guard and compelled it to withdraw with the loss of nine guns, which could not be moved rapidly enough over the hilly ground east of the river. Though we lost guns we captured more than nine hundred prisoners.

You will gather from this account that General Allenby was insufficiently provided with troops to carry out his designs. The great German onslaughts in the West had strained our resources to the utmost; every white man who could be spared from the other theatres of war was hurried to the Western front. Until Allenby could obtain reinforcements from India, our offensive in Palestine could make but little progress. Our

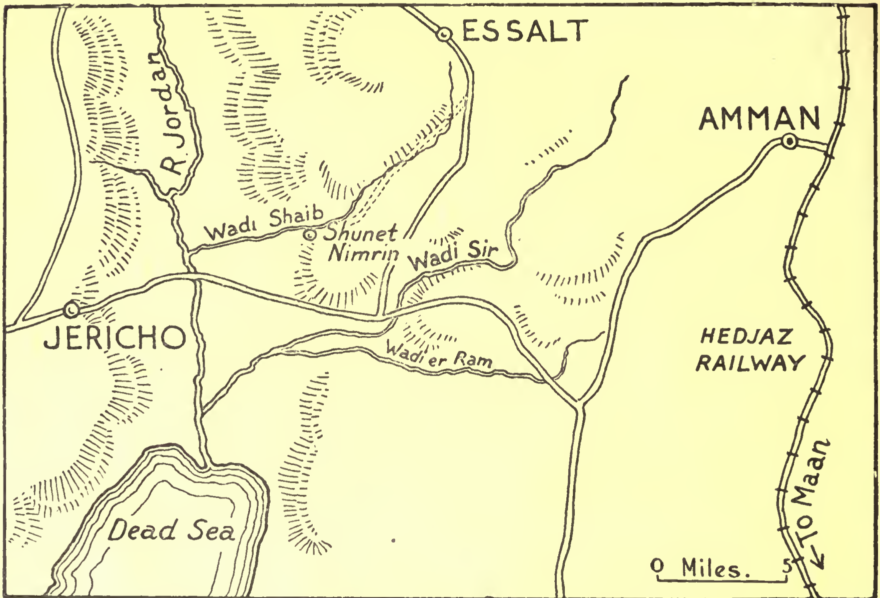


Gurkhas capturing a Turkish Position.

(By permission of The Graphic.)

airmen, however, continually bombed Amman, and further south the Arabs gained several successes. On 19th May they attacked Maan, and having demolished sections of the railway, retired with 264 prisoners. Six days later they again raided the railway, wrecked two stations, tore up ten miles of permanent way, and captured 125 prisoners and four machine guns.

On 13th July the Turks, strongly aided by Germans, attacked our bridgeheads on the Jordan, and also our positions on the ridge to the north of Jericho. A fine charge of Indian lancers



routed the enemy to the east of Jordan, but to the north of Jericho the enemy managed to penetrate our lines. Next day a vigorous counter-attack by Australian and New Zealand troops hurled him out again, and gave us 510 prisoners, 350 of them being Germans. Thereafter to the end of August we made no further move of importance. There were successful minor operations east of the Jordan, and numerous bombing raids on Turkish positions, but otherwise the situation in Palestine was "as you were." Towards the close of September, as we shall learn in a later chapter, Allenby surrounded the Turkish army, and achieved one of the most complete victories of the war.

CHAPTER V.

THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS IN SIBERIA.

I AM now going to tell you one of the most remarkable stories of the war. Examine a map of the Austrian Empire and find the plateau of Bohemia.* You will observe that it is fenced in by lofty mountain ranges, and that within its bounds rises the great river Elbe. This plateau much resembles Cumberland and Westmorland and the north of England. Hill and dale, pasture and field, mine and factory intermingle, and the gaiety and colour which we find farther south are absent. Bohemia is the richest and most productive part of the Austrian Empire. She has great wealth of grain and other food stuffs, and rich stores of coal, iron ore, and rare minerals, and has well been called the "pearl of Austria." Her only drawback is that she has no seaboard; though Shakespeare in his play *A Winter's Tale* endows her with one. Prague, its capital, stands on the river Moldau, which winds its way through the country from south to north, and breaks through the northern wall of mountains to join the Elbe. In the Middle Ages Prague was one of the leading cities of Europe, and even now it is one of the finest. Artists from all parts of the world love to visit the city and study its ancient buildings. Nowhere in Central Europe is there a city with so many historical associations. With its towers, spires, minarets, and domes, it seems almost an Eastern city.

There is a good reason why Prague should have an Oriental air. The Czechs, who form four-fifths of its population, are the descendants of Slavs who were driven westward by fierce foes as far back as the fifth century. They displaced a Germanic tribe which occupied the plateau, and settled down upon it.

* See p. 50.

Guarded by their wall of mountains, they maintained themselves as independent under their native princes until 1526, when the Turks so gravely threatened Central Europe that Hungary, Austria, and Bohemia were forced to unite against them. In 1618 the Bohemians raised a religious rebellion, and two years later were crushed by the Austrians at the Battle of the White Mountain. Thereafter Bohemia was ruled as part of the Austrian Empire.

The Czechs are hard-working, thrifty, intelligent, and enterprising; but they are far from peaceable, and are always ready to fight in defence of their rights. In Moravia, Prussian Silesia, and North Hungary lives a kindred race, the Slovaks. They form part of the Czech nation, but were included in

Map showing Country of the Czecho-Slovaks—Bohemia, Moravia, Prussian Silesia (traversed by the upper waters of the Oder), and North Hungary.

Hungary as early as the tenth century, and were thus separated from their kinsfolk. Nevertheless, from that day to this they have kept up the connection, and have always considered that they formed one nation with the Czechs. All told, the Czechs and Slovaks number between eight and nine millions. They still retain their ancient Slav tongue, and cherish their literature, which dates from the ninth century.

All through the ages the Czechs and Slovaks have been persecuted by Germans and Austrians, whom they hate with fervour. They have never abandoned the hope of becoming independent and living out their national life in their own way. When the present war began they believed that out of the upheaval they might again emerge as a free nation. The Allies, quite early in the struggle, encouraged them to

Czecho-Slovaks swearing Loyalty to their Flag.
(By permission of The Illustrated London News.)

hope that when the Central Powers were overthrown a new era of freedom would begin for all the enslaved nations of the Austrian Empire. A National Czecho-Slovak Council was formed, and in August 1918 was recognized by the Allies as the body entitled to speak for all Czecho-Slovaks "rightly struggling to be free."

The title of this chapter is, "The Czecho-Slovaks in Siberia." Probably you are surprised to hear of these people in North Asia. How came they to wander so far from home? What were they doing on the icy steppes of Siberia? How did they fare in those far-off regions, and what followed? The answers to these questions reveal a most amazing series of incidents, and you will learn before you reach the end of this chapter that the appearance of Czech and Slovak soldiers in North Asia brought with it a chance of rescuing Russia from the chaos into which it had fallen. You will also learn that their peril called the Allies—British, French, American, and Japanese—to their aid, and that a new battle-front was formed on Russian soil.

Before you can understand the story I must take you back to December 22, 1917, the day on which German and Austrian representatives met Russian delegates at Brest Litovsk to discuss terms of peace. Amongst the black-coated, ribboned, and starred agents of the German and Austrian Kaisers were Kuhlmann, with his narrow face and shifty eyes, and his unfailing skill in debate; Count Czernin, who seemed to be the embodiment of artless good nature; and General Hoffmann, chubby of face, but apt to blow himself up with importance like a turkey-cock when called upon to give a military opinion. Opposite to them sat the Russians, mostly dirty and ill-clad, smoking their large pipes placidly through the debates. They took but little interest in the practical side of the discussions, but were always ready to talk wildly and at large about the rights of man and the beginning of a glad new time in which the world would be freed from kings and kaisers and the rule of the rich.

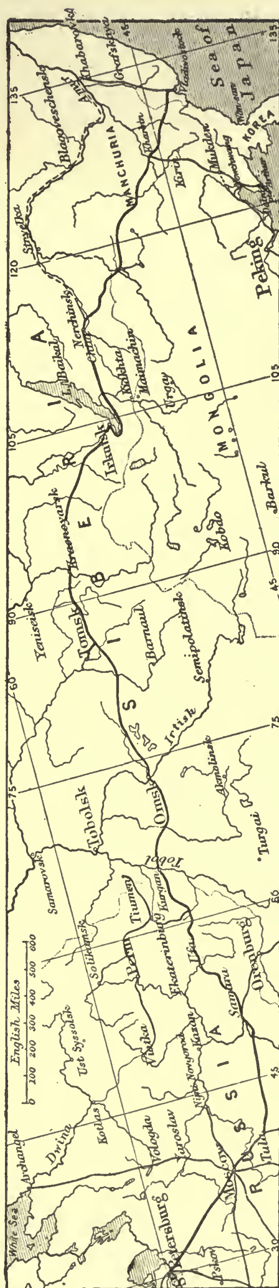
On 28th December the Central Powers agreed to withdraw their troops from Russian territory, but insisted that Poland, Lithuania, Courland, and part of Esthonia and Livonia * should be separated from Russia, and should be under the

* See map, p. 70, Vol. IX.

overlordship of Germany. The Bolsheviks refused to agree to this. Trotsky denounced the Germans as hypocrites, and declared that if these Border states were not given the right to say for themselves under what government they would live, Russian forces would again take the field. None of these Border states really wished to join Germany. Indeed, Esthonia, Livonia, Lithuania, and Courland were strongly anti-German; only the nobility and rich landowners had any desire for the rule of the Kaiser. The Poles, however, were disunited, as they have always been throughout their disastrous history, and Germany could afford to treat them with scant respect.

The case was quite different in regard to the Ukraine and Finland. The Little Russians of the "Borders" (for this is the meaning of Ukraine) had formed a Rada or Central Council, and were determined to govern themselves. They set up a republic of their own, and fought steadily against the Bolshevik troops. Finland also declared for independence.

You have not forgotten how the Russian leaders blustered and raved,* and how, when they had ruined the country, they fondly supposed that they would be able to persuade the Germans to follow their example. To their horrified surprise they found the Kaiser's armies rapidly marching towards Petrograd, win-



The Siberian Railway.

The Ussuri (mentioned later in this chapter) is the tributary of the Amur which joins the main river at Khabarovska.

* See Chapter VIII., Vol. IX.

ning victories all along the route. Then came the German demand that the peace terms must be accepted within forty-eight hours, and the Russian leaders were forced to give in. On March 3, 1918, the Peace of Brest Litovsk was signed. By this peace the Central Powers became masters of the Ukraine, and thus won a gateway to the rich wheat-fields of the Steppes. They also gained access to the Black Sea, which was now wholly in their hands, and this gave them the opportunity to push into the Caucasus. The Treaty of Brest Litovsk stripped the Russians of all their gains since the year 1667, and consequently the districts of Ardahan, Kars, and Batum were no longer theirs. Germany meant to secure them for herself. The Treaty of Brest Litovsk had given her routes on both sides of the Black Sea to the oil-wells of Baku, the cotton-fields of Ferghana, the borders of Persia, and the northern frontier of India.

You can clearly understand that the outlook was now grave for the Allies. The enemy had won lands which would supply him with oil, food stuffs, and cotton, despite the blockade. Moreover, by gaining access to Central Asia he had now an opportunity to stir up Persia, and even to send his agents into India and China. In these countries he hoped to kindle fires of revolt which the Allies would be powerless to extinguish.

There was one bright ray in the gloom, and it came from a quite unexpected quarter. The Czechs of Bohemia, and their kinsmen the Slovaks of Northern Hungary, for four long centuries had cried aloud for freedom. They had been forced to join the armies of Austria-Hungary; but their hearts were with their fellow-Slavs the Russians, and when they were sent to the Eastern battlefields they deserted by regiments, and went over to the enemy. They were excellent soldiers and well officered, and their hatred of the Austrians and Germans was so intense that they were ready to fight against their former masters with all the zeal and fervour of crusaders.

After the Russian Revolution a Czecho-Slovak brigade was enlisted; it soon grew into a division, which formed the spearhead of Brussilov's last offensive. When Russia refused to continue the fight there were two Czecho-Slovak divisions in being, and they demanded to be sent to France to continue the struggle. The Bolsheviks were willing that they should leave Russia, and in February 1918 granted them a passage

to Vladivostok, in order that they might be conveyed by the Allies to the Western front.* When peace was signed at Brest Litovsk the bulk of the Czecho-Slovak forces were in the Ukraine. The advance of the Germans under von Linsingen placed them in a serious position. Their flanks were turned, and the Germans held the railway for a hundred miles in their rear. Nevertheless they cut their way through, and to prove their loyalty to the Bolshevik Government, gave up most of their equipment.

This done, they began their journey. Time after time they were betrayed by the Bolsheviks ; Red Guards and Austro-German prisoners, led by German agents, attacked them and murdered their wounded comrades. Though they were thus shamefully treated, they refused to fight with the Russians or meddle with their politics. Neither persuasion nor threats could move them from their purpose, which was to join the Allies as soon as possible, and fight on Western fields for the independence of their race. Some of them remained in South and Central Russia, where they fought the Bolsheviks bravely though at great odds ; but the majority set their faces eastward, and crossed the Urals into Western Siberia, where, in agreement with the anti-Bolshevik inhabitants, they set up a government of their own at Nishni-Udinsk, a station on the Trans-Siberian railway, about three hundred miles north-west of Lake Baikal. Some ten thousand others pushed on eastward, and in fifty-six days reached the sea at Vladivostok.

On page 109 of our fifth volume I mentioned the perilous but successful journey of another dauntless Ten Thousand. You will remember that the Greek soldier Xenophon and his companions joined Cyrus the Younger, and fought for him in Persia. When Cyrus was killed at the Battle of Cunaxa (401) the Greek officers were treacherously murdered, and their soldiers were left stranded in the heart of an unknown continent, more than a thousand miles from home, and in the midst of fierce foes. They marched northward along the Tigris valley, through the wilds of Kurdistan, beating off the

* The Czecho-Slovak battalions, mainly formed of ex-prisoners, also fought with the Italians; and in France a whole army corps of men of the same race, recruited from all over the world, on the appeal of the National Czecho-Slovak Council took the field on behalf of the Allies. They carried their own flag of red and white.

Bolshevik Misrule in Russia: Civ

(From the picture by John Wladimiroff

Our illustration, from the brush of a Russian artist, shows Russian peasants fighting their neighbours i
who still believed that th

ar, Murder, and Pillage.

permission of The Graphic.)

t province of Riazan. The nation was hopelessly divided between the upholders of Lenin and those
re of a Tsar was best.

enemy day by day, and at length, after five months of terrible hardships, they reached the Black Sea at Trebizond. When the Greeks saw the waters of the Euxine gleaming before them they broke out into joyful shouts of "The sea! the sea!" Their march has always been regarded as one of the greatest feats of ancient times. The march of the Czecho-Slovaks through Siberia was just as worthy of renown, and their joy when they caught a glimpse of the North Pacific at Vladivostok can only be compared with that of the Greeks when they saw the way of deliverance lie open before them.

The Trans-Siberian railway * now becomes important in our narrative. It stretches right across Northern Asia for a distance of more than four thousand miles, and thus links the East with the West. It is a fine engineering work, and is, indeed, one of the wonders of our time. The first sod was cut by the Tsar Nicholas the Second on May 12, 1891, and the last rail was laid on November 3, 1901. Before the war the journey occupied some twenty days, and the total expense was from £35 to £40.

Moscow is the European starting-point of the railway, and in the days of peace an express ran twice a week to Vladivostok. The carriages were comfortable, larger and broader than those to which travellers are accustomed in Great Britain. The trains were lighted by electricity, and so well heated by steam that though the thermometer outside might show ninety-two degrees of frost, the carriages were warmer than an ordinary British home. Each train included a large dining saloon, with a well-stocked library, bathrooms, a barber's shop, and a dark room for photographers.

A Belgian soldier who belonged to the Belgian Armoured Motor Car Section fighting with the Russians, and who, after the Russian peace managed to reach Vladivostok by rail, gives us an interesting account of his journey. I shall briefly tell you his story, because it gives us some idea of the railway and of the state of the country in the early part of the year 1918. His story begins in February, when civil war was raging in Kieff, the capital of the Ukraine, and his unit was waiting for a favourable opportunity of leaving the country. He and his comrades had already obtained passports from Krylenko, the Bolshevik generalissimo; but they had much

* See p. 53.

difficulty in securing railway accommodation and food for the journey.

They destroyed their armoured cars, and on 20th February left Kieff for Moscow. At that time Austro-German troops were pouring into Russia, and three days later they captured Kieff. The Belgian party reached Moscow without adventures, and got as far as Vologda, the junction station of the Trans-Siberian with the Archangel line. They would have made their way to Archangel, but the harbour was frozen; and had they tried to reach the Murman coast, where the waters are ice free, they would have had to go back towards Petrograd. This they dared not do, as they feared that the German advance would bar their way. They therefore decided to move eastward across Siberia.

Amidst the deep winter snows they crossed the Urals, and halted at Ekaterinburg, the town in which the Tsar was afterwards murdered by the Bolsheviks. Then they entered Siberia, and proceeded without difficulty to Omsk, where they met with their first check. A rumour had reached the town that the Japanese had landed at Vladivostok, and it was known that, under General Semenov, a counter-revolution was beginning in Manchuria, where anti-Bolsheviks had formed a White Guard. The Soviet of Omsk ordered the Belgians to give up their rifles, but this they refused to do. At last, when they gave their word of honour not to join the enemy, or part with their rifles until they were back again in Belgium, they were allowed to proceed.

From Omsk they proceeded to Irkutsk, 3,500 miles from Moscow, and thence passed through the magnificent country around Lake Baikal. At the station of Baikal they saw on a siding a railway carriage in which some officers, deported by the Bolsheviks, were kept prisoners. Two of the officers managed to escape while the Belgians were in the station, and by crawling under some railway vans succeeded in hiding themselves in the train. The Belgians concealed them, and although the Bolsheviks sought high and low for them, they were not discovered. Thus they escaped to Manchuria.

Beyond Lake Baikal the Belgian train stopped at a small town in which there was a large camp of Austrian prisoners. Many of the men had been in captivity since 1914, and large numbers of them had died of exposure.

At Chita, an important gold-mining centre, the local Soviet stopped the Belgians, and again an attempt was made to disarm them. So far Krylenko's passports had been honoured ; now they were not recognized, and the Soviet of Chita tried to seize the travellers. They were, however, rescued by some Cossacks, who recognized them as having served with Brussilov. Nevertheless, the Chita Bolsheviks detained them for two days, and searched the train diligently for machine guns, which they did not find.

A short distance beyond Chita the Trans-Siberian railway branches in two : one line follows the Amur river through Russian territory ; the other proceeds to the coast through Manchuria, along a more southerly route. The Soviet of Chita ordered the party to travel by the Amur line ; but the Belgians refused, even though they were confronted by some fifty armed men. They insisted on travelling into Manchuria, much to the annoyance of the Bolsheviks, who naturally did not wish Semenov, with whose forces they had fought more than one engagement, to gain possession of the train and engine. Finally it was agreed to allow one of the officers to travel as far as the frontier station under a white flag, and there procure a train which would carry the travellers into Manchuria.

For three days the party waited at the last Siberian station, and there had an opportunity of seeing the Bolsheviks in camp. All of them were badly equipped, and some of them were in civilian dress. While the Belgians were waiting for their train, the Bolsheviks were reinforced by some drunken soldiers, who brought with them two field guns and a small supply of munitions. German prisoners were allowed to move about freely.

At length a train arrived, guarded by Chinese soldiers and bearing the inscription, " East Chinese Railway." During the night it moved out of the station, and in the morning reached Manchuria, the frontier town. In the station the party saw a Russian officer with a rifle on his shoulder doing sentry-go like an ordinary soldier. This surprised them ; but they soon discovered that Semenov's army was chiefly composed of officers who had left Russia to escape being massacred by Bolsheviks. The station presented a busy scene, for it was an important centre both for Semenov's troops and for those of the Chinese army.

The Belgians remained three weeks in Kharbin, which was

then Semenov's headquarters. He was described as a young, eager, and passionate man. At the time there were many American engineers in the town, engaged in restoring that section of the Trans-Siberian railway which runs through Manchuria. On the night of 20th April the party reached Vladivostok. In the darkness they could only vaguely see the huge shadows of the warships in the harbour. On 24th April they embarked on an American transport which was returning from the Philippines, and on the following day the vessel sailed for America. As it steamed out, the band on one of the Japanese warships played the Belgian national anthem, while the crews cheered the travellers and wished them God-speed on their homeward way.

* * * * * * *

Early in July we learned that the Czecho-Slovaks in Vladivostok were under the command of General Diterichs, a Russian general who had gained distinction in the war. Anti-Bolsheviks were flocking to him, and were looking to him to begin a movement which would ultimately rescue Russia from the awful state of lawlessness into which she had fallen and place her on her feet once more as an independent and orderly nation. A government was set up shortly afterwards, with the object of restoring order in Siberia and delivering it from the grip of the Bolsheviks. At this time the Czecho-Slovaks had control of most of the Siberian railway from east of Penza to Vladivostok. In the region round Lake Baikal the Bolsheviks, aided by German prisoners whom they had armed, held sway. In the third week of July the Czecho-Slovaks drove the Bolsheviks out of Irkutsk, and inflicted a defeat upon them near Chita.

It was clear that without the aid of the Allies the Czecho-Slovaks, gallant as they were, could not make much headway. In the last week of the month, as they advanced from Irkutsk, they found their progress delayed by the destruction of a railway tunnel, and were forced to fall back to the Manchurian border. The Allies now began to take steps to assist them. Great Britain and France had long been willing that Japan should land an army ; but the United States hesitated, because it feared that Allied forces on Russian soil would add to the confusion that then prevailed, and would injure Russia rather than help her out of her distresses. However, on 4th August

The Port of Vladivostok.

The fortified port of Vladivostok is the chief naval port of Russia on the Pacific Ocean and a terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway. It stands on the eastern shore of Amur Gulf, and its harbour of the Golden Horn is said to be one of the most beautiful in the world. The climate is severe, the mean temperature of January being 6° F. The population, which before the war exceeded 60,000, includes 20,000 Chin[illegible]

the United States Government decided to help the Czecho-Slovaks against the armed Austrian and German prisoners who were attacking them, and send American troops to Vladivostok to guard military stores, and to help the Russians to organize in their own defence. It further announced that it had proposed that Japan should do likewise, and that her forces should combine with those of the Allies, so as to safeguard as far as possible the country to the rear of the westward-moving Czecho-Slovaks. At the same time the United States Government assured the Russian people in the most solemn manner that it had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of their country, and that it merely wished to enable the Russian people to regain control of their own affairs, their own territory, and their own destiny.

The Japanese at once landed troops at Vladivostok, and announced that General Otani would command them. Shortly afterwards American and British troops joined them. The Japanese had only been a few days ashore when General Diterichs informed them that unless they could send aid to the Czecho-Slovaks west of Baikal within six weeks there would be disaster. The railway between Chita and Irkutsk runs south of Lake Baikal, and this district was in the hands of the Bolsheviks and their German allies. At all costs it must be cleared if the Czecho-Slovaks to the west of Lake Baikal were to be rescued.

In the last week of August we learned that the Bolsheviks were fighting on the Ussuri River, within a hundred miles of Vladivostok, and that British guns were in action against them. This river is a tributary of the Amur, and joins the main river at Khabarovska. While Czecho-Slovaks were moving along the Vladivostok-Kharbin railway to the relief of their comrades west of Lake Baikal, the Bolsheviks made a sudden raid and threatened to cut their communications. The Czecho-Slovaks were forced to send back troops to meet this threat. Meanwhile the Japanese dispatched a battalion of infantry along with Russian cavalry to the Ussuri front.

Good news arrived on 4th September. The Czechs, marching east from Lake Baikal, had captured the former headquarters of the enemy, and, advancing in three columns, were reported to be within one hundred and seventy miles of Chita. Semenov's Cossacks, who had been driven across the Chinese

border, had begun to move forward again, and the well-trained and well-equipped soldiers of Japan were on the warpath. On 18th September, Japanese cavalry occupied Blagoveshchensk, and on the same day infantry which had been sent up the Amur by steamer also reached the same town. Two thousand Austro-German prisoners laid down their arms.

Meanwhile the Siberian Government was beginning to raise an army to free the country from the Bolsheviks and their German and Austrian comrades. It was hoped that by the spring of 1919 some 150,000 men would be equipped by the Allies, and that they would be able to hold the line of the Urals while the Czecho-Slovaks, with the assistance of the Japanese, British, American, French, and other troops, cleared the country. Thus in the closing days of September it seemed likely that before long Bolshevism would soon be a spent force in Siberia.

Train on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

CHAPTER VI.

FIGHTING IN MESOPOTAMIA.

IN Chapter IX. of our ninth volume you read that, at the close of March, General Marshall, who had succeeded Sir Stanley Maude as Commander-in-Chief in Mesopotamia, occupied Hit, on the Euphrates. After a long pause he set his forces in motion again, and on 24th April pushed the right wing of his army along the road leading by way of Deli Abbas, through Kifri and Kirkuk, towards Mosul. From the map * you will observe that he might have proceeded to the same city by the road running along the right bank of the Tigris. The route which he adopted was that used by the caravans, because it passes over high ground, and avoids the floods, which are liable to impede traffic in the Tigris valley during the spring months. The distance from Bagdad to Mosul by way of the Tigris is 250 miles; the road through Kifri and Kirkuk is more roundabout. Nevertheless, because it was a better road, and because it would be impossible to advance along the Tigris and leave a force of three or four thousand Turks upon the British right flank, General Marshall chose it.

You will remember that General Maude in his last dispatch described how he drove the Turks from Deli Abbas to the Jebel Hanrin range of hills. (See page 271, Vol. VIII.) On December 3, 1917, General Marshall attacked the Turks, and drove them to Kifri. In this operation he was assisted by Russian forces which operated on his right flank. His next move was to occupy Khanikin, on the right flank of the hills. Then he prepared for a further advance, which was to be made by four separate columns. All preparations were complete by 24th April, when, preceded by cavalry,

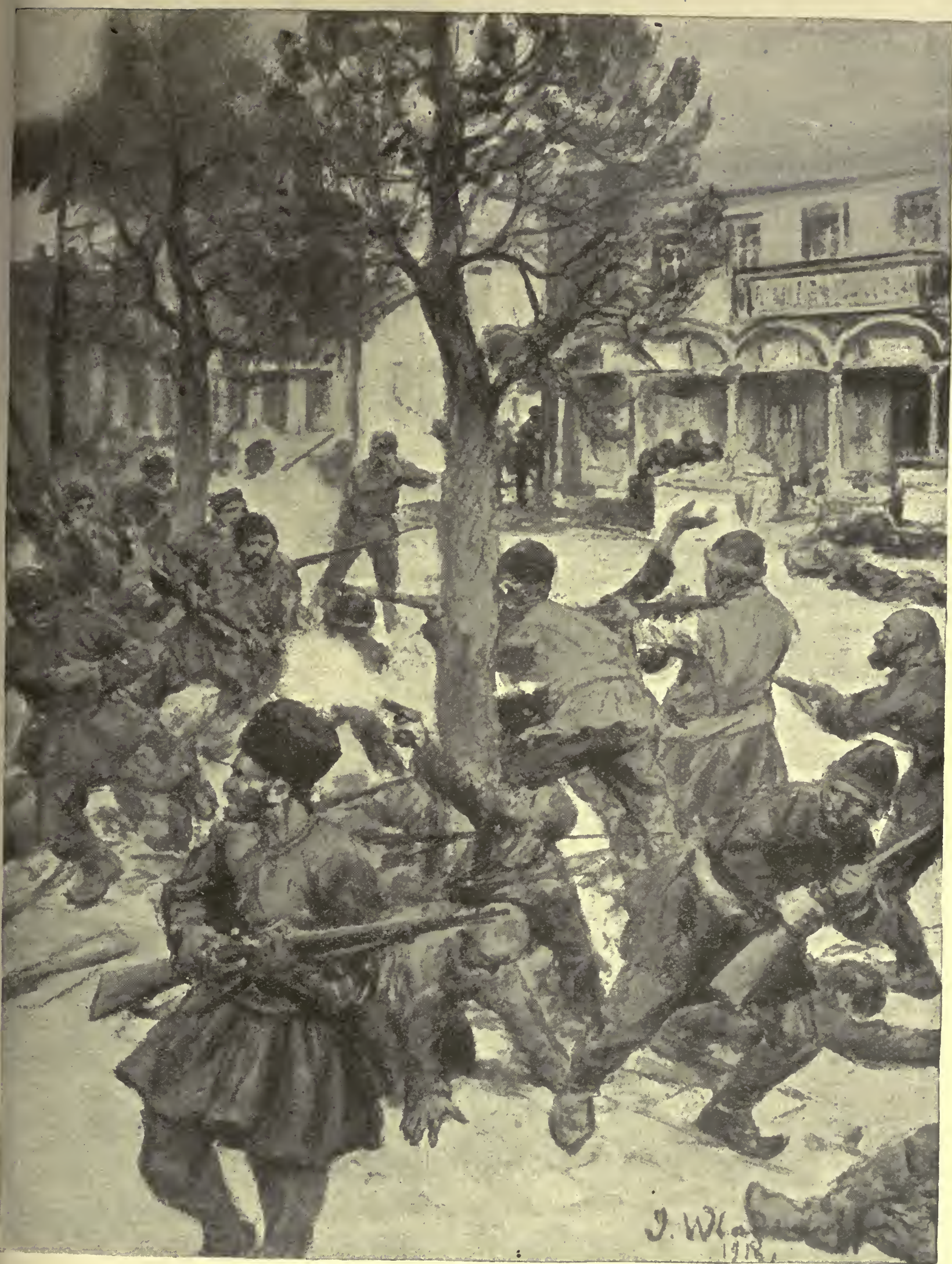
* See double-page illustration, pp. 72–73.

the troops moved forward very rapidly. Kifri was reached on the 27th, and the cavalry captured 500 prisoners during the Turkish retreat. Fighting forward without a check, and taking prisoners and guns by the way, they passed through Kirkuk, 140 miles north of Bagdad, and by 11th May the advance guard lay on the Lesser Zab river. Before the end of the month the Tigris had been reached within seventy miles of Mosul.

The city of Mosul stands on the right bank of the Tigris, 220 miles north-north-west of Bagdad. The town, which is still partly walled, was very prosperous between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, and for long afterwards was a great trading centre, specially noted for muslin, to which it gave its name. After the Suez Canal was opened its trade fell off greatly. The only ancient building of interest in the place is the great mosque. On the other side of the Tigris are the mounds and ruins which mark the site of ancient Nineveh. These mounds have been opened up by excavators, and are now honeycombed with tunnels choked with fallen debris, and strewn with broken bits of pottery and masonry. The most interesting "finds" are now in the museums of Western cities.

The ruins consist of the remains of a wall about seven miles round, broken on the Tigris side by two great mounds, the larger of which contains the remains of two palaces, one of which was enlarged by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, who decorated its walls with pictures, such as the siege of Lachish and the setting up of his winged bulls at Nineveh. Unhappily, this palace was destroyed by a fire which consumed all its glories. The other mound contains the palace built by Assur-bani-pal. Out of it were taken, amongst other things, the splendid series of hunting scenes engraved upon stone (now in the British Museum), and a very large collection of cylinders covered with Assyrian inscriptions. Nobody really knows when Nineveh was founded ; but we know that it dates from the days when the world was very young, and that it was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians six hundred years before the birth of Christ.

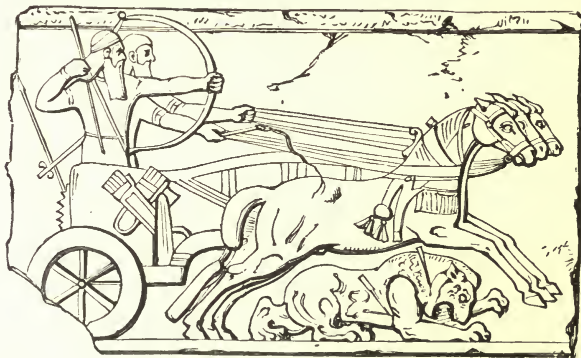
General Marshall wished to reach Mosul as soon as possible, so as to cut the main road by which the Turks were then invading Persia, in the hope of seizing Enzeli, the Caspian Sea port of Teheran. He could not, however, advance with safety.



What happened at Baku before we arrived. See page 71.
(*By permission of The Graphic.*)

His troops were more than five hundred miles from their sea base at Basra, and 120 miles from the railhead at Deli Abbas. The roads were mere tracks, which his motors could travel in dry weather, but which after rain were impassable. Further, numberless water courses had to be crossed, and these in wet weather became roaring torrents, which could not be forded. He had, therefore, to call a halt; and as the hot season was beginning, it was clear that no forward move could be made until the autumn.

After the capture of Hit on 9th March our forces pushed along the Euphrates, eighty-three miles north-west of Hit; but, after the check to General Allenby's forces east of the Jordan at the end of April, they retired to the town. Had Allenby secured the Hedjaz railway and occupied Damascus, it would have been possible for Marshall to join hands with him. As it was, an advance up the Tigris promised nothing. Our troops in Mesopotamia, therefore, "marked time" during the hot weather.



CHAPTER VII.

HOW WE OCCUPIED AND ABANDONED BAKU.

BEFORE you read this chapter spend a little time in examining the large map on pages 72–73. In the right foreground you see the minarets and domes of Bagdad, with the broad stream of the Tigris in front. Follow the river northward, and beyond Tekrit you will see the line of the Lesser Zab, on which we were standing in May. Some seventy miles still further north is Mosul, which is in railway communication with Constantinople. Now carry your eye right beyond the Armenian plateau to the Black Sea, and notice the railway which runs from Batum through the Caucasus past Tiflis to Baku, on the Caspian Sea. On the eastern side of the Caspian Sea you notice that the railway begins again at Krasnovodsk, and proceeds through Central Asia to Afghanistan.

I have already told you that, after the Treaty of Brest Litovsk was signed, Turko-German forces pushed into the Caucasus in the endeavour to reach Baku, cross the Caspian Sea, and supply themselves with the cotton and food of Central Asia. You also know that by so doing they would outflank not only our troops in Mesopotamia, but that force which had been operating in Persia under the command of Sir Percy Lake since the beginning of the war. Further, an advance along the Central Asian railway would enable the Germans to stir up strife in Persia, Afghanistan, India, and perhaps in China.

The first great object of the enemy was to reach Baku, which you see standing on a peninsula forming a crescent-shaped bay of the Caspian Sea. Why did they specially wish to secure Baku ? The town is one of the most remarkable and, perhaps, one of the most repulsive on earth. The soil for miles around is sodden with petroleum. Everywhere you see the headgear of oil wells, of which there are some three

thousand. From these wells, before the war, about ten million tons of oil were obtained every year. In these days, when petrol is used for the engines of vehicles, submarines, destroyers, and aeroplanes, a vast supply of oil is needed for the purposes of war. If Baku could be seized the enemy would find himself in possession of a rich prize.

Most of the oil wells are situated on the Balakhani peninsula, some eight or nine miles north of Baku. Pipe lines carry the oil into the "black town" of Baku, where it is refined. The work of pumping up the oil goes on night and day, amidst a dazzling glare and a deafening roar. Ships carry some of the oil and its products to the various towns on the Caspian Sea; but most of the oil is sent by pipe line to Batum, on the Black Sea.

The population is very mixed, but the majority of the townsfolk are Armenians, between whom and the Tartars there is fierce animosity. In 1905 there were riots which led to great loss of life and much destruction of property. Many wells were burnt out, and trade was almost entirely suspended for a time. As our story proceeds we shall see these Armenians of Baku in a most unpleasant light.

In February 1918, while General Marshall was preparing for his advance towards Mosul, the Turks advanced towards the south end of Lake Urmia, intending to push forward and seize Enzeli, the Caspian Sea port of Teheran. Enzeli, which is little more than a squalid village, stands on a lagoon, and is very difficult of access. The traveller is conveyed by boat from Enzeli to Resht, six miles away; and he then drives to Kazvin, from which he must make a journey of ninety miles to reach Teheran. The Turkish advance threatened Sir Percy Lake's small force, and it was therefore necessary for British troops to reach Enzeli without delay. British troops were therefore hurried from Bagdad to Enzeli. They had to march over six hundred and fifty miles across a wild, hilly country devoid of railways and good roads. Two lofty snowclad passes had to be traversed, and, as you will see from the map, they had to make a roundabout journey by way of Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana,* in order to avoid the enemy forces south of Lake Urmia.

* Chief city of the ancient kingdom of the Medes. It was afterwards the favourite summer residence of the Persian and Parthian kings.

We know little about the journey, but we do know that our men had to suffer much hardship during their long march. They were repeatedly attacked by hostile tribesmen, and they had many difficulties to overcome amongst the mountains; but they pushed on doggedly, and at last arrived safely at Enzeli.

Towards the end of July the inhabitants of Baku begged that a British detachment should be sent to their town, in order to organize and stiffen their defence against the Turks and Germans, and prevent the oil fields and the shipping on the Caspian Sea from falling into the enemy's hands. From the first the British realized that the suggested expedition would have to run many risks. It was known that the Armenian National Council had made peace with the Turks; but it was believed that the seven or eight thousand Armenians in Baku, together with Russian anti-Bolsheviks and a British detachment, would be able to make a stout resistance against the ten thousand Turks who were attacking the town, and not only prevent the enemy from securing the oil fields, but lock, bolt, and bar the gateway into Central Asia.

On the night of 25th July the Bolsheviks at Baku were overthrown, and a new government was set up. At once it sent messages requesting the dispatch of British officers, instructors, and troops. The request was complied with, and a day later transports were sent to Enzeli to convey them across the two hundred miles of Caspian Sea to their destination. Owing to the long line of communications which had to be maintained, we could only send a small number of troops. Even in that case we had to be assured that shipping would be provided to bring stores and supplies regularly from Enzeli. The new government at Baku was unwilling at first to make the necessary arrangements. It appeared to think that no further effort was necessary as long as British troops appeared on the scene.

The forces which Baku had at its disposal consisted of 7,500 Armenians and 3,000 Russians. On 17th August an attack was organized to beat off a Turkish enveloping movement north of Baku. But the Armenians proved to be a broken reed: they refused to fight, and dispersed to their homes, and as a consequence the operations ended in failure. On the 26th of the same month the Turks made a determined advance, but

The British at Baku: barrin

(From the drawing by G. F. Morrel

This picture shows the route by which British troops advanced from Bagdad by way of Hamada view of the Mesopotamia

the Back Door to India.

By permission of The Graphic.)

to Enzeli, from which they were carried by ship to Baku. It also gives an excellent bird's-eye theatre of war.

were beaten off by men of the North Staffords and Worcesters. Our men were heavily assailed, and were forced to give ground. Nevertheless, they checked the enemy, who was also repulsed on another sector.

By the end of August it was only too plain that the local government was not supporting our forces properly, and that we could no longer retain our small detachment in Baku without running the gravest risks. The enemy was massing in numbers very rapidly, for he had good railways behind him, and would soon be in a position to overwhelm our troops. On 1st September the order was given to leave Baku; but on that day the Turks again attacked. Once more the local troops failed. They retired in face of the enemy, and the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, which covered their retirement, suffered heavy losses.

On 2nd September the Russian general, Bicharakov, occupied the port of Petrovsk, on the west coast of the Caspian Sea, two hundred miles to the north of Baku. He promised to send reinforcements to Baku, and ships were dispatched to Petrovsk to fetch them. A week elapsed before the promised reinforcements arrived, and then they were only few in number. Between 2nd and 9th September, when the Russians from Petrovsk reached Baku, the enemy had been quiet; and the local government, having been afforded a breathing space, plucked up new courage to defend the town. The Caspian fleet, which was still in Russian hands, was persuaded to refuse the British the necessary shipping in order to enable them to get away. While the local government was thus engaged, the Armenians were behaving more treacherously: they were planning to hand over the town to the enemy. When their plots leaked out, the men of the fleet were so angry that they trained their guns on the Armenian quarter.

On 14th September the Turks attacked in force, and a battle ensued which lasted sixteen hours. Again the brunt of the fighting was borne by our men. When the battle was over they abandoned the place, no doubt glad to be out of the nest of treachery and cowardice which they had striven so hard to defend. By this time the Russians had become thoroughly disgusted with the Armenians of Baku, and on 10th September were thinking of deposing the government and taking control of the place.

So ends the wretched story of perfidy, shilly-shally, and poltroonery. Our forces were under the command of General Dunsterville, an officer well known in India, and said to be the original of "Stalky" in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's school tale, *Stalky and Co.* They fought gallantly, and they were prepared to hold on and suffer any hardships if only the townsfolk and the local troops would give them support.

Had the people of Baku been loyal and brave, it is quite probable that a defence would have been made equal in valour and tenacity to that which General Williams made in Kars during the Crimean War. At the outbreak of hostilities the Government sent him to Asiatic Turkey to organize the Turkish army against the Russian invaders. He was forced to retire on Kars, which was provisioned for four months, and was there besieged by 50,000 Russians. In September a grand attack was made on the place; but the garrison drove off the enemy with great slaughter. Not until his men were starving, and there was no possible hope of relief, did General Williams yield up the town. A similar defence might have been made at Baku had the Armenians shown any pluck. They were, however, honeycombed with treachery, and their soldierly qualities were beneath contempt. The town was divided against itself, and could not stand.

We must not, however, assume that all the Armenians were as craven and faithless as those of Baku. The responsibility for their disgraceful conduct cannot be laid at the door of the Armenian people, who during the war had given many proofs of their devotion to the cause of the Allies. On 3rd October our Foreign Office mentioned four points which the Armenians might regard as the charter of their right to liberation at the hands of the Allies. In the autumn of 1914 the Turks offered them self-government if they would assist Turkey in the war. The National Congress replied that as a nation they could not work for the cause of Turkey and her allies. As a consequence the Turks massacred in the most cold-blooded and fiendish manner more than 700,000 Armenians—men, women, and children—during the year 1915.

From the beginning of the war that half of the Armenian nation under Russian rule organized volunteer forces, and under their heroic leader Andranik bore the brunt of some of the heaviest fighting in the Caucasus campaign. After the breakdown of the

Russian army at the end of 1917 those Armenian forces took over the Caucasian front, and for five months delayed the advance of the Turks. By so doing they rendered very important service to the British army in Mesopotamia. Further, Armenian soldiers at the time of the Baku treachery were fighting in the British, French, and American armies, and bore their part in that great victory by which, as we shall learn in a later chapter, General Allenby completely overthrew the Turks in Syria.

* * * * * * *

In the above account the name of the Russian general, Bicharakov, is mentioned. A *Times* correspondent tells us that he met this redoubtable soldier in north-west Persia at the time when he was advancing at the head of his Cossacks towards the Caspian Sea. He noticed that on the flag carried by the Cossacks the Scottish thistle and the English rose were embroidered along with the Russian bear, and that it bore the Scottish national motto, "Who dares meddle with me?" Naturally he sought an explanation of this strange blazonry, and discovered that the colonel of the regiment was named Leslie, and that he was the descendant of an old Scottish family.

An ancestor of his had left Scotland for Russia in Queen Mary's time, in order to train the cavalry of Ivan the Terrible, and his descendants had remained in the country ever since. The colonel could speak no word of English and only a few words of French; but he was proud of his descent, and his banner recorded it. He had read of the pipes in the family records, but had never heard them until he fell in with a British force of Highlanders and Indians. His Cossacks rode towards the British camp singing their deep-toned Russian part-songs, the sergeant of each *sotnia*, or squadron, conducting with his whip. British soldiers and Mohammedan sepoys greeted them with loud "hurrahs," and the Jats and Sikhs with their fierce war-cries. As the Russian infantry filed into the camp with fixed bayonets, the piper of a Punjab battalion strode to and fro playing each company in to the tunes of "The Campbells are comin'" and "Scotland the Brave." The Russian colonel, Leslie, hearing the music of his ancestors for the first time, was moved to tears.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MURMAN COAST.—I.

IN foregoing chapters I have described how the Allies gained a footing on Russian soil at two widely different points—in Eastern Siberia and on the Apsheron peninsula at Baku. I must now tell you how they landed in force on the Arctic shores of Russia and occupied a portion of the coast.

If you look at a map of North Russia,* you cannot fail to notice the great blunt projecting mass of land known as the Kola Peninsula. You observe that it forms the northern coast of the White Sea. That sea well deserves its name, for it is thickly frozen over from June to October every year. The surrounding country, as you might expect, is desolate and sterile, but inland there are immense forests which constitute the chief wealth of the country. Most of the people live by hunting and fishing.

On the south-east shore of the White Sea, at the mouth of the river Dvina, you see the town of Archangel, the oldest seaport of the Russian Empire, and the first Russian place with which we British traded. In 1553 Richard Chancellor was appointed pilot-general to Sir Hugh Willoughby's expedition, which set out to search for a north-east passage to China. During the voyage the fleet became dispersed, and Chancellor in the *Bonaventure* pushed on into the White Sea and reached Archangel. The result was that a Muscovy Trading Company was established, and from that day to this there has been a regular trade between Britain and the White Sea in oats, flax, linseed, tar, and timber.

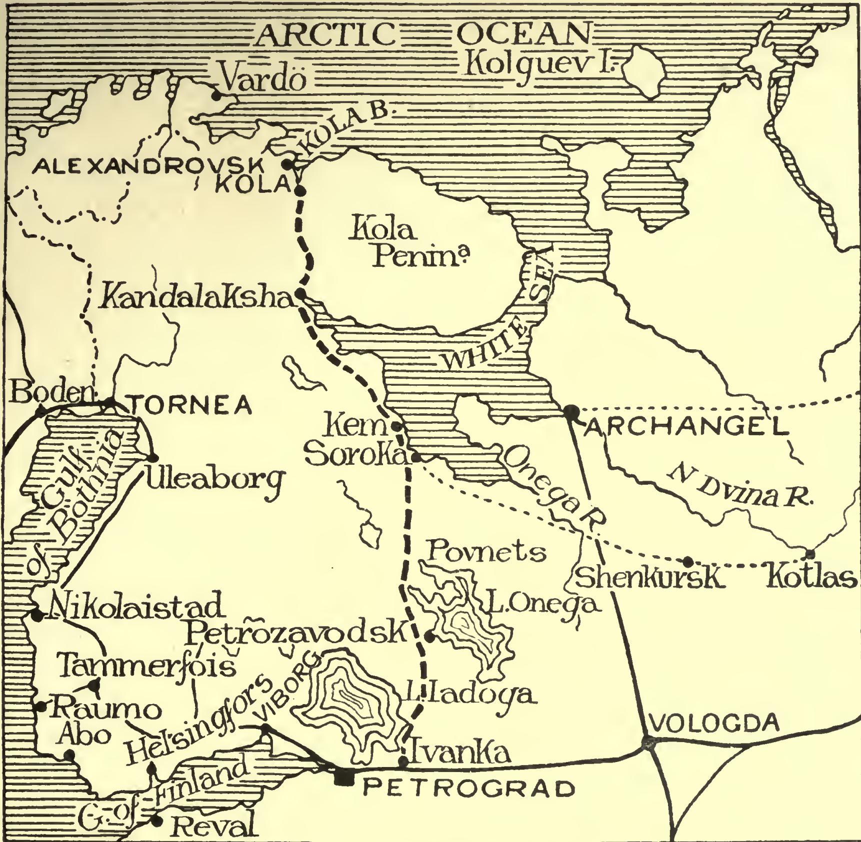
During the war Archangel was a place of the highest importance. From the first we were unable to penetrate

* See p. 79.

A Corner of a Rocky Inlet at Alexandrovsk.

(*By permission of The Sphere.*)

into the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea; consequently the only Russian seaport open to us was Archangel. Only by way of this port could we supply the Russians with those munitions of war which they so grievously needed. During the winters we kept open the entrance as long as possible by means of ice-breakers; but, as you may imagine, the Arctic cold was a



Map showing Railway from Petrograd to Kola.

terrible drawback. Nevertheless, by dint of great labour and perseverance, we made the port serve our needs during the short summer.

Now notice the northern coast of the Kola Peninsula: it is known as the Murman coast. The name Murman is a corruption of Norman, and was probably given to it because

it was constantly visited in very early times by the Vikings, or Varangians, who afterwards played a large part in the making of Russia. This coast is remarkable because, while the White Sea is a mass of frozen floes, it remains ice free all the year round. The North Atlantic drift washes it with warmer water than that of the surrounding ocean, and consequently little ice forms. If you follow this ice-free coast to the north-west you will come to Kola Bay, into which the river Kola discharges itself, and on this bay you will see the port of Alexandrovsk.

Attention had been directed to Ekaterina harbour, on which Alexandrovsk stands, as far back as 1899; but no steps were taken to utilize its sheltered and ice-free waters until the Russians painfully learned that Archangel was insufficient for their needs. In 1910 Alexandrovsk was a little fishing settlement with a population of 384. In that year the Russians began to survey the country for the purpose of building a railway to unite Petrograd with the mouth of the Kola.

This railway, which was completed in December 1916, starts from Lake Onega, and proceeds northwards to the shores of the White Sea at Soroka Bay. Swerving a little to the north-east, it passes Kem, the most important town of the district, and thereafter follows the western coast of the White Sea through a region of small lakes, swamps, marshes, and virgin forests, and then runs onwards to Kola. Its length from Petrograd to Alexandrovsk is about seven hundred miles. Extraordinary difficulties had to be surmounted in the construction of the line, not the least of which were the feeding and clothing of the labourers employed, many of whom were prisoners of war. The work was pushed through during the terrible cold and the long hours of darkness of the Arctic winter. The railway was only opened for traffic in the spring of 1917.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE MURMAN COAST.—II.

LET us now turn our attention for a few moments to Finland, which lies between the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia. The country is a plain of hard, ancient rocks, pitted with countless lakes, some of which are very large and are united with each other. Between the lakes are stretches of woodland and fen, with here and there a few fields carved out of the forest. The rivers and lakes abound in fish, and the great water power of the country is used to work the sawmills and the pulp factories.

Finland is rather a monotonous country, for the forest trees are all of the same kind; but it is a delightful land to visit in summer, when the sun sparkles on the lakes and foaming rivers, and only sets for an hour or so. The people are intelligent and highly educated, and the women had rights of voting long before their sisters in this country were so endowed. I remember that when I visited Helsingfors, the capital of the country, I was surprised to see the names of the streets set up in three languages—Finnish, Swedish, and Russian. Finnish is the language of the peasants, Swedish is spoken by the middle class, and Russian is the official language.

The street names in these languages tell us something of Finland's history. In the old days everybody spoke Finnish. Between 1150 and 1300 the Swedes conquered the country, and gradually the educated people adopted the language of their conquerors. For six hundred years Sweden and Finland were linked together, and as the Swedes permitted the Finlanders to govern themselves, the two countries grew up together in friendship. In 1809, however, the Tsar Alexander I. overran the country, and the Finlanders agreed to join Russia

The Port of Archangel.

if they were guaranteed the same self-government which they had enjoyed during their long connection with Sweden. With his hand on the altar, Alexander solemnly swore to preserve their parliament, religion, and laws; but the promise was not kept. The old rights were taken away, and Russia tried to govern Finland as a Russian province. As a result, the Finlanders hated Russia and all her ways, and before the war they were frequently on the verge of an armed struggle for independence.

In a former chapter I told you that when Russia went all to pieces Finland declared herself independent. Later on she threw herself into the arms of Germany. No doubt the Kaiser promised the Finlanders that they should remain a self-governing nation, and that he would protect them for the future. They did not love the Germans, but they hated the Russians; and thinking that the Kaiser was bound to be victorious, as did many of the nobility and upper classes of Sweden, they went over to his side. German troops were sent into the country, and Finnish soldiers fought along with them. It was not the first time within recent years that Finlanders had fought Russians.

When I was in Finland during the Russo-Japanese War, and was visiting the great water-slide of Imatra, my wife was one day seated by the side of the roaring torrent, using a fan with a picture on it of Fusi-yama, the sacred mountain of Japan. Several Finlanders who passed by, after looking round to see that there were no Russians in sight, solemnly lifted their hats to this emblem of the enemies of Russia. Many of them crossed over to Japan by way of America and the North Pacific, and fought in Manchuria for the little island-nation. We need not wonder that when Russia fell into a state of chaos they seized the opportunity to declare themselves independent, and that they threw in their lot with the strong nation which they believed was bound to carry all before it. They could not, however, have studied Prussian history very carefully, or they would have known that faithlessness to promises has always been a leading feature in Prussian policy.

The Germans sent their troops to Finland for a very special purpose. You know that the Kaiser and his advisers had pinned their faith to the U-boats as the means by which they were going to force Britain out of the war. Our minefields in

the North Sea, our continual and successful hunting of the enemy's sea-jackals, and our bottling up of Zeebrugge and Ostend, were hampering his submarines gravely. If the campaign was to succeed, he must have more and better U-boat bases. Quite naturally he turned his eyes towards the warm-water port on Kola Bay. If he could secure it he would greatly improve his chances of falling upon our shipping, and thus bringing about the object at which he was aiming.

You know that during this war we have suffered grievously because we have put our forces into motion "too late." Happily, on this occasion we took time by the forelock, and early in July we dispatched an expedition to occupy the Murman coast and secure possession of the railway from Petrograd to the warm water port on Kola Bay. It was of the highest importance that the railway should not pass into the hands of the enemy. Had it done so, the Germans, with the help of the Finlanders, would have been able to cut Russia off from all communication with the outer world. If we could hold the railway, we could nip in the bud any attempt on the part of the enemy to establish submarine bases along the coast and provide himself with avenues to the open sea all the year round. For the sake of Russia and for our own sakes we were bound to take care that the Germans were kept at arm's length from the Murman coast.

On 16th July, when our expedition was in possession of the Murman coast, there was a complete German division in Finland. It was stationed between the port of Viborg, on the Gulf of Finland, and Lake Ladoga. Further, the Germans had provided the Finlanders with many officers for training their army. Already a training school and an aviation base had been established, and a navy had been organized by German officers for coast defence. Before, however, the new Finnish army was ready to attack, the Allies were firmly seated on the Murman coast, and had advanced along the railway towards Soroka, 400 miles from Petrograd.

South of the town the railway enters a long defile, flanked by mountains upon which a hostile force could find many strong positions of defence. Down to the end of September the Allies had made no further advance, nor had the Germans tried to drive us from the Kola Peninsula. It was said that the Finlanders were unwilling to be led against the Allies,

and it was known that the Karelians, who inhabit the south-east of Finland, were in arms against the German-led forces. Probably these difficulties prompted the Kaiser to offer to abandon operations in Eastern Karelia if the Allies would withdraw from the Murman coast. Of course, the Allies refused to agree to any such proposal.

Besides securing the coast and foiling the German attempt to establish submarine bases on it, we gained a material advantage by descending upon these Arctic shores. I have already told you that inland the country is densely wooded. Immense quantities of wood were required for our armies on the Western front; and, as you know, most of our forests and copses, and indeed many of our roadside trees, had by this time been cut down to supply the demand. As soon as the Murman district was in our hands we were assured against a timber famine. In this case prudence and material advantage went hand in hand.

While we were seizing the railway up to Soroka, we landed an Anglo-French force at Archangel, to support the inhabitants who had overthrown the Bolsheviks in July. Our forces disembarked without opposition, and were joyfully received by the people, who had been living for many months under a reign of terror. In the neighbourhood the Bolsheviks had a force of about fifteen thousand men, under the command of German officers. This force fell back, and we were thus able to seize much rolling stock, which permitted us to advance along the line.

On 31st August we attacked and defeated the Bolsheviks at Obozcrskaya, seventy-five miles south of Archangel, on the railway that runs between that port and its junction with the Siberian railway at Vologda. Beyond the town the Bolsheviks destroyed the railway, and thus prevented our advance. In the middle of September it seemed unlikely that we should be able to reach Vologda before winter set in. This meant that the Czecho-Slovaks on the Volga could not be relieved until the following year, and that they would have to look for help to their comrades east of the Urals.

CHAPTER X.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF THE SOMME.—I.

HAVE you ever stood by the seashore and watched the ebbing tide ? You see it falling back hour by hour, and, as it recedes, leaving wide stretches of mud, sand, or shingle, with here and there patches of seaweed, or the flotsam and jetsam of the ocean. Back and back it goes, until the edge of the water is far away in the distance. At length the outgoing tide slackens, and then there comes a pause. Soon, however, you see the water creeping forward, so slowly at first that you doubt whether it is advancing at all. But gathering strength, each forward-moving wave gains ground upon its predecessor. Then a breeze blows in from the sea, and soon the breakers, like charging cavalry, come roaring on to the beach. Once more the mud flats, the sand, and the shingle disappear, and the tide foams onward with such mighty strength that it sweeps everything before it. Not until it has reached high-water mark is its progress stayed.

Somewhat thus may we picture the ebb and flow of warfare on the Western front during the spring, summer, and autumn of the year 1918. On 21st March the Germans began the last and mightiest of their offensives. The Allies recoiled before their onset, and fell back over many miles of devastated country. Everywhere the enemy appeared to be irresistible ; several times he came very near to decisive success. In one of his thrusts he reached the Marne, and men trembled for the fate of Paris, as they had previously trembled for the fate of the Channel ports. In making this thrust, however, the enemy had crowded his troops into a wedge-shaped pocket, which was all too narrow for effective movement. In attempting to widen

it he began an operation which permitted the French to make an attack upon his flank and rear. At once, with the eye of genius, Marshal Foch perceived that the enemy had been delivered into his hands. He struck, and at a bound severed the main road and railway communications of his foe. After eleven days of struggle he seized the key position of the whole battlefield, and forced upon the Germans a disastrous retreat.

Four days later, while the enemy was still embarrassed, Foch struck in front of Amiens, and thereafter right down to the close of the campaigning season his blows fell with the force and regularity of a Nasmyth hammer all along the front from the North Sea to the Vosges. Meanwhile victory was smiling upon the Allied arms in other theatres of war. In Syria, Allenby smote the Turks hip and thigh, and two of their armies ceased to exist. While he was reaping the fruits of his success, the Allies in Macedonia were driving the Bulgars before them, and ten days after their offensive began the Bulgarians begged for an armistice, which was followed by unconditional surrender. The first of Germany's copartners in crime had yielded, and two others were trembling on the brink. On the Western front the Germans continued to fall back before tremendous pressure, and ere the first week of October was out, they were beseeching President Wilson to suspend the war with a view to arranging peace. The final victory of the Allies was by this time assured.

July 18, 1918, will for ever be marked as a red-letter day in the calendar of the war. On that day the fortunes of the Allies ceased to ebb, and the tide began to turn. Slowly at first, but with ever-increasing speed, the flood swept forward, until all the old battle-grounds were submerged, and the waves were beating against the last barriers of the despairing enemy. Those twelve weeks between 18th July and 10th October were brimful of triumph. Every day brought its success, and men were afraid to miss an edition of the newspapers for fear of missing news of victory. You who have lived through that time must never forget it. For four long years we had battled against every kind of difficulty, and had faced every kind of discouragement. We saw our bravest and best fall by the hundred thousand on the stricken field; we saw an ally in whom we had trusted play us false; we saw the ships upon which we depended for our very existence go to the bottom

The German Line taken in Flank by a Mounted

This picture illustrates a brilliant piece of work by a hundred and fifty hussars. Under Major Evelyn despite the severest machine-gun fire. Nearly one hundred of the enemy were sabred and one hundred three thousand yards of the line. Fewer finer exploits are recorded.

Charge in the Teeth of Heavy Machine-Gun Fire.

H. W. Williams they charged after our infantry had broken back, and took the enemy's line in flank prisoners were taken. Our infantry were rallied, and advancing once more recovered a depth of over

in large numbers, and our gallant men baffled and discomfited time after time. Doubt and anxiety cast a gloom over even the stoutest heart as we trod the dark valley. But we never despaired, never believed for a moment that

> "Though right were worsted, wrong would triumph."

We never doubted that God in His heaven would maintain the cause of righteousness, truth, and justice, and that one day the clouds would break. When the great American Republic threw in her lot with us, and her stalwart sons began to appear in ever-increasing numbers on the battlefield, a rift appeared in the sky. Then, slowly but surely, the sun of victory shone upon us, and ere the equinoctial gales began to blow we knew that our cause must triumph, and that its finest fruits would be "Peace on earth, good will towards men."

* * * * * * *

Let us look at the opposing forces between the Ancre and the Arve on the morning of 8th August. From Albert down to the junction of the Luce and Arve rivers, Sir Henry Rawlinson's Fourth British Army was holding the line. On his right, from Castel down to the south of Montdidier, lay the First French Army, under General Débeney; from Montdidier, through Courcelles and Belloy to the Oise, the ground was covered by General Humbert's Third French Army. All were under the supreme command of Sir Douglas Haig; and opposed to him were two German army groups—the first under General von Böhn, the other under Generals von Hutier and von der Marwitz. The army group of von Böhn watched the front south of the Somme, while the other group operated north of that river.

Before I describe the battle which began on the morning of 8th August, let us have clear ideas as to the character of the ground over which the fighting was soon to rage. The main battlefield is divided into two by the gentle and somewhat marshy valley of the Luce, that tributary of the Arve and sub-tributary of the Somme which has been so frequently mentioned in these pages. North of the river up to the Somme stretches the plateau of Santerre,* mainly consisting of cornfields without hedges, dotted here and there by a few small

* See Chapter III., Vol. VI.

woods, and presenting no serious obstacles to an advance. At its northern limit is the wide, marshy valley of the Somme.* The river itself is little more than a sluggish brook ; most of its water fills the canal which runs through the valley, on either side of which are many broad, shallow pools, almost impassable because of the deep mud on their beds and on their shores. South of the little river Luce, the plateau, which also is part of Santerre, is slightly more wooded, and the copses are larger.

Now let us follow the British line as it was before the whistles blew on the morning of 5th August. It ran from Albert, along the Ancre valley to Ville, where it left the river-side and proceeded west of Morlancourt in a south-westerly direction past Sailly, in front of Villers-Bretonneux, across the Luce and the Roman road from Amiens to Roye, until it reached the Arve. Then the line swung south-east past Biaches, Montdidier, Courcelles, and Belloy to the Oise. If you follow the trace of this line, you will see that Montdidier stood in a salient. Sir Douglas Haig meant to strike all the way from Ville to Biaches, six miles north of Montdidier.

You have not forgotten that much of Mangin's success on 18th July was due to the fact that he was able to concentrate his troops unknown to the enemy. He assembled his men in a forest, and nature assisted him by raising a storm which made observation impossible and drowned the noise of the large number of Tanks which were to take part in the assault. Haig also intended to mass his men secretly. He had no wood to act as a screen, but he assembled his men silently in the darkness of a moonless night.

* The following rhyme, which is taken from the *Manchester Guardian*, may help you to remember the main rivers which constantly appear in our story :—

> "The river Lys flows to the northward of Lille ;
> Next the Scarpe and Sensée help Escaut to fill.
> Further south comes the Somme, and southward again
> The Oise, fed by Ailette, is joined by the Aisne ;
> While the Vesle, one of Aisne's supplementary streams,
> Links up a connection 'twixt Soissons and Rheims."

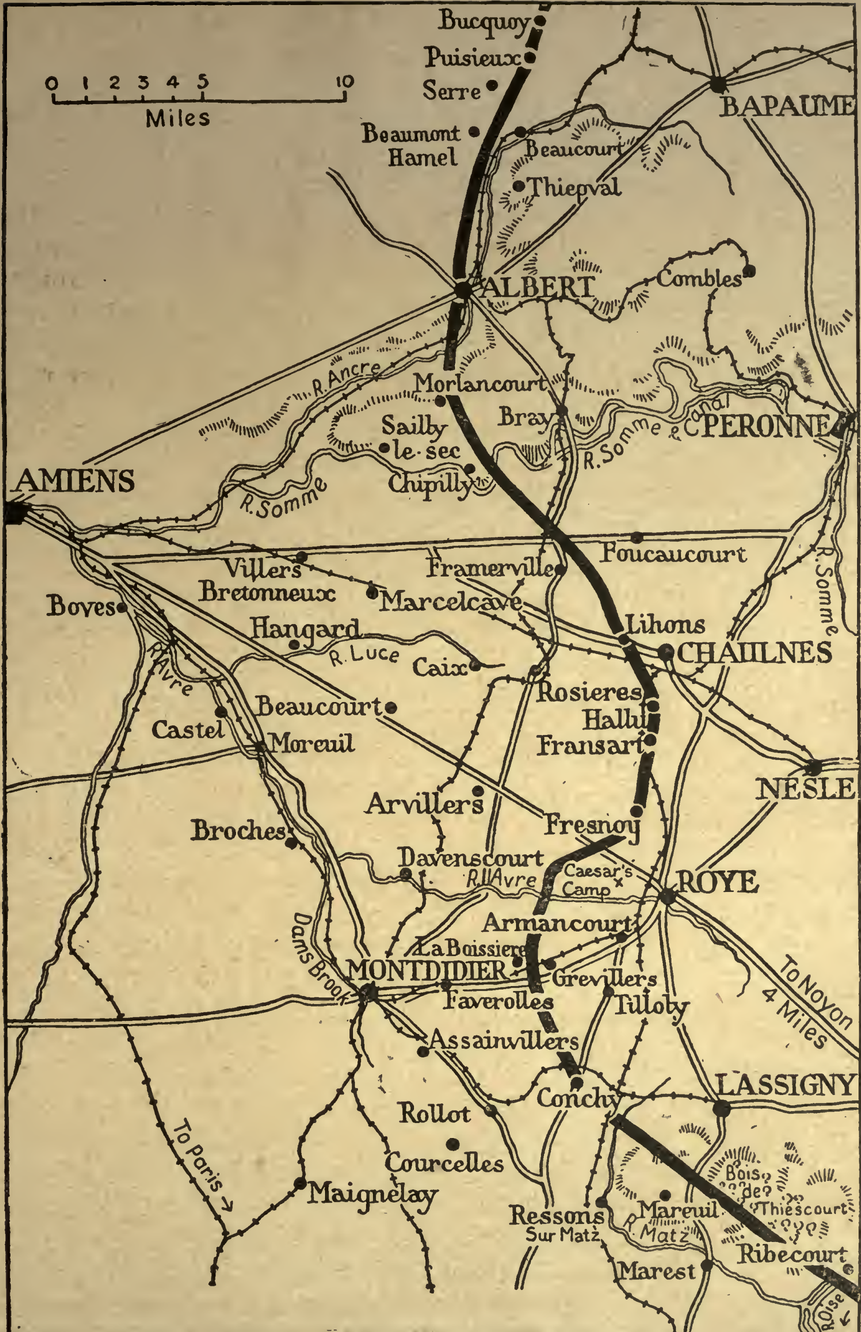
Escaut is the French name for the river known in Flemish as the Scheldt. It rises about ten miles north of St. Quentin, passes Cambrai and Valenciennes, then flows north-east into Belgium, where it enters the North Sea by two mouths—the East Scheldt and the West Scheldt.

It was an anxious night for our commanders. Four Australians had been captured two days previously when cut off by a heavy barrage, and it was feared that they might have let slip an incautious word which would have informed the enemy of our intentions. It was known that the enemy was in the habit of putting English-speaking Germans amongst the prisoners, and that these fellows, by pretending to be companions in misfortune, tried to draw our men into conversation and extract information from them. Afterwards a German report fell into our hands. It stated that all the Australians were reticent, "and only after a lot of talking to opened their mouths." When they did open their mouths they told the German officers that their rations were very good, that their losses were light, and that their comrades were confident of winning. They laid stress on the number of Americans in France, and said that there was little sickness on our side. The German report added, "The sergeant, who is the only one who has served for a long, unbroken period with the troops, refused to make any military statement, and could not be shaken in his resolve by any of the means employed."

All honour to these faithful and loyal soldiers! "Australia may well be proud of the manner in which, when unnerved by a fierce attack and a heavy barrage, alone in the midst of the enemy, and tested by every dodge and form of persuasion, with their backs to the wall, they clung to their resolve not by any chance word to give away their side to the enemy."

The night before the attack the rain of the previous days ceased, and as the gray of dawn began to appear a dense mist arose and shrouded all our preparations from the enemy airmen. Before it was fully light our guns began a very brief but most violent bombardment against the enemy's lines all the way from Ville to Biaches. It lasted only three or four minutes; nevertheless before it ceased many hundreds of the light Tanks, known as "whippets," and small armoured cars, little more than "machine guns on wheels," were moving against the enemy all along the line, and were flattening out his defences. They appeared out of the fog like phantoms, and the enemy was completely taken by surprise; how completely is seen from the fact that his counter-shelling was slow to begin, and was not at all heavy up to noon.

The advance began on the extreme left at twenty minutes



Map to illustrate Successive Stages of the Advance up to August 20th.

past four, and unrolled itself from north to south. Beyond Moreuil it was about five o'clock when the men went over the top. On the wings there was strong resistance; but in the centre, where the plateau is crossed by the great Roman road from Amiens to St. Quentin and from Amiens to Roye and Noyon, our men carried all before them. This was to be expected, for the roads were excellent, and the new light Tanks, the armoured cars, and the field artillery could move forward with great speed without meeting any formidable obstacles. On the wings, however, the conditions were far from favourable.

Glance at the map, and notice the triangle between Ville on the Ancre and Chipilly in a bend of the Somme. This triangle, which is only some six thousand yards at the base and less than two thousand yards deep, contains difficult ground readily capable of defence. You observe that it is flanked on the south by the marshy valley of the Somme, and that it would be impossible to bring troops rapidly across the boggy ground in order to support the attack on the north side.

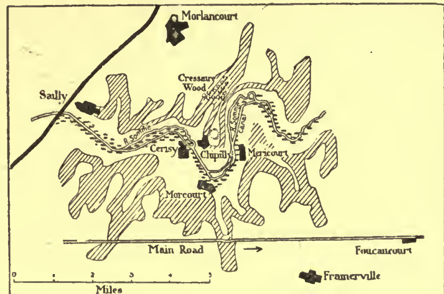
South of Moreuil we were faced by two difficulties. In the first place, the ground between our trenches and the river Avre consists of a bare slope, everywhere commanded by fire from the high bank on the other side of the river; and, in the second place, our "whippets" could not be used until the passage of the river had been forced and bridges had been constructed. From what I have said you will clearly understand that our men on the extreme right and left would have to fight hard, and that their advance could not be rapid.

North of the Somme, in the angle between that river and the Ancre, our attack was not at first successful. On the previous night the Germans had made an assault at Morlancourt, and our arrangements had been upset. Nor did we fare much better south of Moreuil, where the fighting was stubborn and indecisive. But in the centre our Fourth Army made a wonderfully rapid advance. The Canadians, for example, began sending in prisoners sixteen minutes after they left their assembly trenches, and by eight o'clock had won a large part of their first objectives. The advance was specially noticeable, because behind the rapidly moving Tanks, and on either side of the Roman road from Amiens to St. Quentin, rode cavalry rounding up prisoners.

In little more than two hours after the start a tier of villages

had been seized. The whole German system of defence between the Somme and the wood north of Moreuil had broken down, and our men moved forward as fast as the Tanks could advance. One young officer, for example, led his men forward 4,000 yards before they were assailed by a single bullet. The guns were pushed up behind the infantry with great rapidity, and one battery was in action well across the German front line thirty minutes after the attack was launched. Some of our batteries followed the Tanks so closely that they came under fire of machine guns. The staff of one German army corps was captured entire, with the exception of the general, who saved himself by jumping half dressed into a motor car and driving away at full speed. A train full of reinforcements steamed into a station which had just been occupied by our troops, and was captured with its human freight.

A Canadian officer well summed up the advance in the following words: " It was a complete surprise. We were into the Boche first line before they knew there was anything doing. Our light artillery are now miles beyond that, and are going strong. It is hard holding in the men now. They have waited a long time for this."



Map of the Chipilly Area.

Now, I must interrupt this story of rapid victory to tell you what happened on the wings. Here is a little map which will help you to understand the situation in the angle north of the Somme. You observe that the village of Chipilly stands on a peninsula of high land thrust out from a deep, narrow loop of the Somme. Behind the village the ground climbs up to the plateau on which is Gressaire Wood. At the first bound our troops carried this wood, all the high ground of the peninsula, and entered Chipilly. Later on the enemy counter-attacked, retook the wood, drove us from the village, and gained a position from which he could enfilade the shallow valley on the south side and shell the main road by which the Australians and Canadians were advancing eastward.

The Limit of our First Day's Advance: the Village of Caix on the Luce.

(*By permission of The Sphere.*)

CHAPTER XI.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF THE SOMME.—II.

IN the former chapter I told you how we were held up on the Roman road from Amiens to St. Quentin. You will remember that at the other end of the line, south of Moreuil, we were also checked, but not so gravely or for so long. In a village opposite to Moreuil the Germans put up a stout resistance, and only after three hours of hard fighting were the French masters of the place and in a position to begin crossing the Arve. Not until eight in the morning was the village captured by chasseurs, who reaped as their reward a harvest of 400 prisoners. When they advanced on Moreuil they found the ruined walls so thickly manned by machine guns that a frontal attack was impossible. The chasseurs, however, aided by Tanks, proceeded to encircle the place, and before noon were in possession of it and of a high plateau to the east. Then the Germans seem to have retreated in a hurry, for the French pushed on so rapidly east and south that by evening they had reached the Roman road from Amiens to Roye, near Beaucourt. Near this place they were checked for a short time by two woods; but when these had been turned, their advance was continued rapidly.

Wondrous stories were afterwards told of the cavalry ranging over open country at night and capturing villages; of Tanks crashing into machine-gun posts and batteries of guns; and of armoured cars, far in advance of the infantry, receiving the surrender of Germans miles ahead of the battle. One car, for example, is said to have met a German transport column which tried to turn and escape. Four German officers rode up to see what was the matter; but all were shot down from the car, which then took the drivers and escort prisoners. At

A Tank destroying a German Machine-Gun Post.

(*By permission of The Graphic.*)

several other places the cars fell in with both mechanical and horse-drawn transport, which they captured.

One car attacked a railway train, set it on fire, and completely wrecked it. Another dashed into a village where the garrison was at breakfast, and as it careered down the street, fired through the windows into the houses where officers and men were eating their morning meal. A third ran into the hutments of a corps headquarters, shot down some of the staff, and riddled the huts with bullets. It afterwards hunted the officers, and drove them into the woods. Frequently the cars surprised groups of men who were totally unaware that the forward lines had been breached, and on one occasion they rounded up parties of soldiers reaping the harvest of the fields.

A glance at the map on page 93 shows you the extent of our gains by the evening of the first day of the battle, Thursday, 8th August. You notice that we lay behind Chipilly, and that we had made but little progress in the angles between the Ancre and the Somme. But south of the Somme we had thrust out a salient which at its furthest extent was nine miles east of the positions from which we started that morning. In fifteen hours we had advanced from five to nine miles on a front of from sixteen to eighteen miles. The threatened city of Amiens was now nearly twenty miles to the rear of the firing-line. Some fourteen thousand prisoners and hundreds of guns had been captured, as well as vast quantities of stores and supplies. The great offensive, which was to continue almost without cessation for many weeks to come, had begun with a success that promised soon to end in triumph.

* * * * * * *

Let me pause for a moment to tell you a little story. It is said that when we were retreating before the German onset Marshal Foch was asked, "Suppose this war were a game of cards, which hand would you prefer to play—your own or Ludendorff's?" The Marshal replied that he preferred his own. Though all men applauded his spirit, they were not then sure that his judgment was sound. Ludendorff had been holding the lead since the beginning of play on 21st March. He had won trick after trick, and the rubber seemed secure. But before the game was played out, Ludendorff in his over-confidence made a slip. Foch, who still retained a trump card, instantly took advantage of his opponent's error, and at once

regained the lead. He won the trick on the Marne salient, and now had opened the new and decisive game in the most promising fashion.

* * * * * * *

I now pass on to the second day of the battle. There was not much forward movement on that day, for the Germans had begun to rally and to send reinforcements into the firing line. Nevertheless two important successes were won: Chipilly hill was recaptured by the British, and Montdidier fell. The little town of Montdidier by this time is well known to you. It is said to have received its name from Charlemagne, who called it the Mount of Didier, in memory of his captive the Lombard king Didier, who was first imprisoned in its castle. It contains two ancient churches, and was the birthplace of Parmentier, the man who persuaded the French to grow potatoes in the seventeenth century. A statue to his memory stands in the town.

Let me first tell you how Montdidier was surrounded and forced to yield. So far only the left wing of General Débeney's First French Army had been engaged. It had struck on a front of about three miles north of Biaches. Its right wing extended beyond Montdidier, and was continued by Humbert's forces eastward to the Oise across the old battlefield of the Matz, where, you will remember, von Hutier had sustained a severe defeat in the second week of June. While Rawlinson's Fourth Army was sweeping all before it and Débeney's left wing was making slow headway, the French right wing stood fast, and did not attack at all. This seems to have puzzled the German generals. They remembered that when Foch made his great counter-attack at the Second Battle of the Marne he only struck hard against the western side of the salient; elsewhere his troops did not attempt to do much more than hold their ground. The Germans seem to have thought that Foch would follow his former plan, and only attack on the north side of the Montdidier salient. They themselves were so accustomed to follow rules, and to try to repeat former successes, that they supposed Foch to be similarly minded. They had yet to learn that his quick, eager brain enabled him to strike out in the heat of battle just those unexpected movements which suited the occasion.

In the late afternoon of Friday, the second day of the battle,

the French along the southern side of the Montdidier salient were suddenly set in motion. Again the enemy was taken by surprise. The French went forward rapidly, and before night had reached Assainvillers. The advance of Thursday had carried them to the north-east of Montdidier, and now they lay to the south-east of it. By the time darkness fell Montdidier was in a narrow and dangerous pocket. So rapid was the movement that the German commander of the town did not realize his danger, and determined to hold on until morning. Meanwhile the French pushed forward during the darkness to Faverolles, where they cut the main road and railway by which alone the enemy could retire. On Saturday morning the Germans in Montdidier were so hopelessly surrounded that they surrendered. Scarcely pausing in their advance, the French pushed on to La Bossière.

Now that we understand how the French advanced their line on the southern wing of the salient, let us learn how, north of the Somme, Chipilly was won. You will remember that on Thursday Australians and Canadians had reached Framerville, just to the south of the Roman road from Amiens to St. Quentin. They now pushed on to the south-east, and occupied the height upon which the large village of Lihons stands. This height commands the railway junction of Chaulnes, only some three thousand yards away. As soon as our guns began to shell the railway the Germans could no longer use it, and Montdidier could not be reached by train. So long, however, as they still maintained their hold on Chipilly hill they could greatly hamper our movements along the Peronne road. It was clear that Chipilly must be recaptured.

American reinforcements were sent up, and at half-past five on Friday morning they delivered their assault. They had to face heavy shelling and intense machine-gun fire; but they advanced steadily, and recaptured Gressaire Wood, where they took 500 prisoners. In little more than half an hour the point from which the Germans had enfiladed the valley and the road south of the Somme was in their hands.

CHAPTER XII.

SOLDIERS' STORIES OF THE BATTLE.

A CORRESPONDENT who traversed the battlefields on the second day of the advance gives us an excellent picture of the ground which our men had rewon. He drove in a motor car over what was on the previous day No Man's Land, and over the front-line trenches of the Germans. When the road became impassable owing to the shell-holes made by our guns, he strolled freely over the deserted plain, while the guns were thudding and our aeroplanes were buzzing overhead. He was struck by the large number of German dead ; never before on any battlefield had he seen so many bodies of the enemy and so few of our own. In that part of the field crossed by the Canadians he saw ten of the enemy for every soldier of the Dominion.

The battlefield, he tells us, was an extraordinary sight. It was a wide expanse of rich level farm land, destitute of hedges and buildings. The crops were already in the ground when the Germans began their advance at the end of March and drove the farmers away. Without attention the crops had grown and ripened, and were much freer of weeds than one would expect. He saw field after field of wheat, oats, and barley ready for harvesting. There were many acres of clover which should have been cut and carried long before, but were still blossoming, and over them fluttered many butterflies—swallow-tails, pale clouded yellows, and painted ladies. He also saw patches of potatoes, in one of which, beside the road, a Canadian was busy digging up the tubers. He had already filled two sacks, and was at work on a third. This, you must remember, was upon ground which yesterday lay well behind the German lines. Paths had been driven through the crops to give access

to the trenches, and these paths were pitted with shell-holes and machine-gun posts, encircled by barbed wire which our Tanks had flattened out as they ploughed their way onward.

"Santerre Plateau," he says, "is one wide plain, where, between skeletons of what were once pleasant villages, there is nothing to impede the view, so that the wreck of an aeroplane lying on the ground or a stranded Tank makes a conspicuous landmark. Otherwise its flat expanse is covered with yellow grain, or patches of clover or waste land, gay with flowers—yellow and scarlet poppies, blue chicory and scabious, and purple vetch. The growth is generally high enough to hide the trench parapets; but as you move about you find the whole surface scarred with bits of trenches and machine-gun posts and rifle pits. The Germans had expended immense labour in making the ground defensible, but the trenches were mostly poor, and the belts of wire were nowhere very deep. Many machine-gun posts and rifle pits for snipers are makeshift in character.

"There are dug-outs no bigger than graves—some no more than three feet wide, three feet deep, and less than six feet long. In these the snipers lived and slept. Some were camouflaged with sheets of corrugated iron or with bits of tarpaulin, while others were strewn with grass. In places small shell-holes made by our field guns had been deepened, so that a man could almost stand upright in them, fire his rifle over the edge, and then crouch down and be hidden. It is all makeshift and small work, but there is an enormous amount of it, so that the whole plain was organized for defence in depth, tier behind tier, a scattered bit of trench behind a post, and pit covering pit. I saw no concrete or any permanent work."

Everywhere there was evidence that the enemy had been completely routed and had fled panic-stricken. Groups of machine guns with seven or eight German dead around them, and a litter of helmets, rifles, and equipment, were constantly seen. In scraps of wood or in the open fields lay batteries of field guns deserted by their gunners. By the roadside were dead horses and overturned lorries. In some places there were wagon-loads of *débris*: rifles, bayonets, grenades, cartridges, helmets, overcoats, entrenching tools, barbed wire, letters, books, torn papers—all the things that soldiers would leave behind or fling away as they took to their heels or surrendered.

* * * * * * *

One great result of the successful offensive was the deliverance of the old city of Amiens. Whereas German guns were bombarding the town on the night of 7th August, twenty-four hours later there was no German soldier in arms nearer the town than sixteen miles, while at most points of the line the distance was from twenty to twenty-five miles. During the

A Cage crowded with German Prisoners

captured during the Advance. [*British official photograph.*

German advance in March the citizens—140,000 men, women, and children—were turned adrift between the rising and setting of the sun. For four and a half months the place was deserted. One could walk for miles up and down the silent, shattered streets without seeing a single human being. Grass grew in the roads, and great gaps in the buildings showed where shells had burst. While the German guns were within range of the city, our troops abandoned it altogether. Though it lay on the main road to the front, they avoided it, so as to give the enemy no excuse for destroying it. Happily the grand old cathedral had not greatly suffered. As soon as the city was out of the war zone the inhabitants began to return; shops took down their shutters, and though there were many dismal blanks in the streets, it speedily began to renew its old life. The bells of the churches—the voices of the city—rang out once more, summoning its citizens to their old homes, and bidding them fear no longer.

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I have already told you that Tanks played a large part in the victory. A young Glasgow soldier who drove one of them says: "Our Tanks were of the light or whippet type, and we travelled fast. The way was difficult because of the low-lying mist. The German guns opened on us in great fury, but we swept forward at our top speed, as the mist was rising and day was breaking. In front of us were a number of huts, and at the end of them a better-looking building of the villa type, wired and netted in order to make it bombproof. It was the brigade headquarters.

"From an open window appeared the head of an elderly man in a nightcap. He was shouting something in German. Our infantry were entering the building from all sides, and on the stairs they found many officers in different degrees of dress and undress. It was the brigade staff, and the old man was the brigadier. They were too surprised for words.

"The alarm had been given everywhere now, and across the landscape we could see the hurrying figures of German officers and men. Into these flying groups we fired as fast as we could, and hundreds were shot down. So far the infantry had been keeping up with us very well, but now they began to slacken their pace. Later on cavalry appeared on the scene. Near to us were men of the Scots Greys and the Inniskilling

Dragoons. They were charging into the retreating enemy from three different points.

"The Germans were throwing aside packs, rifles, and everything likely to hamper their movements. Suddenly a party of Greys appeared at the end of the main road by which the enemy was retreating. They were coming across country, and had succeeded in heading off the fugitives. Overhead were British aeroplanes. The Germans saw the new danger in time, and turned panic-stricken from the road to escape the sabres of the Scots. They plunged into the fields on the right and left. The British airmen hovered above them for a while, and then began to drop bombs upon them. Many were killed and maimed with every burst. The survivors headed back, were intercepted by our Tanks, and shot down by the score.

"One German battalion commander was among his men, clad only in pyjamas. He was trying to rally them, but they showed no respect for his authority. Paying no heed to his orders, they ran on past our Tank, which was firing at them all the time. We knocked them out as fast as we could; but we had no time to stop, for our job was to press on in support of the cavalry and airmen, while the infantry gathered up what was left.

"By the afternoon we had reached a point nearly nine miles from the start of our offensive, and had the satisfaction of being told that we had gone farther that day than any other unit taking part in the battle.

"The Germans were still on the run, panic being general; and what added to it was the fact that other German troops were being hurried up, and were pushing through the fugitives by every road. Instead of getting into the battle, these units were mixed up among the retreating Huns, and were adding to the general confusion. Some who were trying to get into the fighting line, to retrieve the disaster that had overtaken their arms, lost patience with their comrades, and opened a heavy fire upon them, driving them back in confusion towards us. Then again the cavalry came into action, and the Scots Greys made a magnificent charge.

"Our attention was attracted by a commotion in the rear, and more Germans appeared. They were flying from the second German lines to our right and left. They had been

driven off the main road, and were seeking safety in our lines, under the mistaken notion that they were not likely to be molested on the way by British troops. Some of our Tanks turned about and poured thousands of rounds of machine-gun bullets into them, mowing down many and sending the survivors reeling towards our infantry lines behind.

"Now that our battle-line was established on a front of about two miles wide, nearly nine miles from the original point of departure, the enemy began attempting counter-attacks on both flanks. Our Tanks, however, were more active than ever, and kept up a fierce cross-fire which picked off the enemy by the score. The Scots Greys attacked once more, and after desperate fighting succeeded in clearing the whole line. They started the Germans on the run again, and kept them on the move in spite of repeated attempts to rush our new positions."

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In the dense fog of the early morning of Thurdsay, 8th August, five men of a well-known Canadian battalion became separated from their unit. While groping their way forward, they suddenly came upon a German trench fully manned. The corporal of the little party at once gave the word to fire, when, one after another, over a hundred Germans came tumbling up out of the trench to surrender, thinking, no doubt, that the five men were supported by a larger force. They were marched off safely to the rear.

In the Canadian sector the Tanks were led into action by "Dominion," on the top of which sat the piper of a Manitoba unit skirling away with all his might. He came through unwounded, but another piper who led his battalion into action was killed. During the three days' fighting which I have described the Canadians made a record advance of 22,000 yards—that is, twelve and a half miles.

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A correspondent thus describes the battlefield twenty-four hours after the enemy had retreated: "To-day the green and brown fields were alive with our troops, wagons, and guns. You met strings of laden limbers rolling easily past the forts that were thought impregnable yesterday. Infantry tramped wearily but with light hearts through the tattered villages, sweating under their packs and calling out for news as they passed men coming back. The wonderful organization of the

army was seen at its best. Roadmakers plied their shovels amid the craters, and kept adding extra lanes of traffic as the day wore on. Signalmen and wirelayers carried forward the nerves of the army through the fields overgrown with grass and curious little flowers.

" In one part of the line, three hours after the troops reached their final objective, they were eating a hot breakfast. The familiar, ever-welcome sign of Y.M.C.A. was seen on a roofless French café six miles within the crumpled German line, before the Tanks had finished chasing the 11th Corps staff out of Framerville and down the Péronne road. Food, and even books and papers, were set out under the Red Triangle for tired and hungry fighting men; and they trooped into a rickety building, to eat and be refreshed in a room which the Germans had occupied only a few hours before."

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Here is a story which illustrates the generosity of the average British Tommy to his prisoners. During the advance our walking wounded came slowly back in twos and threes across No Man's Land to a dressing station, close to which a coffee stall had been set up. Four German prisoners sat on a bench devouring bread and jam. Beside them were some of our men, talking in undertones of the morning's work. One German drained his mug, and looked as though he wanted more. A Tommy took the mug, tossed it to the coffee-stall keeper, and said, " Give him another, Bill." The mug was filled and passed down. " Good ? " asked Tommy. The German grinned sheepishly. " You old blighter," said the Tommy, " ain't you ashamed of yourself ? "—and he tossed him a cigarette.

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Our airmen had many strange and exciting adventures during the advance. So numerous were our machines and so vigorous was their attack that they played a large part in creating panic behind the enemy's lines. The German fighting machines were completely smothered for a time, and as a consequence their headquarters had no idea how far our armoured spearhead had thrust into their territory, or to what extent it might be necessary to retreat.

The first duty of our attacking airmen on Thursday morning was to bomb all the enemy aerodromes and disorganize their squadrons. This was done so successfully that for the

first few hours of the advance not a single German plane was able to leave the ground. Then attacks were made on the bridges of the Somme, so as to prevent reinforcements from being brought up. High explosives were dropped in large numbers, and many bridges were wrecked. Next, the airmen assailed transport and bunches of infantry, and made huge havoc amongst the fugitives. So thick in the air were our machines that the pilots had great difficulty in keeping clear of each other. Only by dint of the most skilful steering were they able to avoid crashing into each other as they wheeled and dived above the crowded roads and ruined villages.

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Some of our airmen pursued anti-Tank guns, which were being hurried up, and destroyed the crews. Others attacked trains bringing up reinforcements, circling round them at a height of fifty feet and firing through the windows into the carriages, or shot down teams of horses which were drawing observation balloons out of danger. The retreating Germans were constantly harried with gun-fire and bombs. One airman sailed over a column of troops so low that his wings nearly grazed their helmets. When he flew off, at least a hundred of the enemy lay dead on the road.

When the German airmen rallied and ascended, our men hurried off to give them battle, and sent many of them to destruction. One of these daring youngsters crashed a German machine and followed it down; but when he was about to fire, the occupant jumped from his seat and held up his hands in token of surrender—an incident that had occurred more than once previously. The British airman refused to kill his enemy, and flew away, only to fall in with superior numbers, and to be sent spinning to the ground with a mortal wound. He only lived long enough to make his report.

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A good story is told of the Australians who captured Marcelcave village on the first day of the battle. A frontal attack was difficult, as the face of the village was studded with machine guns; consequently two companies of Australians with a Tank attacked it from the rear. The Tank went first, and when it had pushed its way through the place there was nothing for the infantry to do. Then the Tank handed over the village to the Australians, and the commanding officer gave the fol-

A British Scouting Squadron with Pilots and Mechanics.
(British official photograph.)

lowing receipt for it: "Item: received on 8th August, from Commander ——, Tank No. —, one village of Marcelcave in indifferent repair." The Tank commander was careful to preserve the receipt as a souvenir of a very successful afternoon.

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When the writer of these lines visited the battle-front, he noticed that outside the headquarters of each army a large map was prominently displayed showing the position of the Allied line at the moment. Suppose you had looked at one of these maps on the evening of Saturday, August 20th, you would have noticed that our line ran from Ville, south-east to the east of Chipilly, and continued in the same direction to the east of Framerville. Thence it struck south through Lihons to Fresnoy, made a bulge westward round Roye, and swung south-east to the Lassigny hills. Between Moreuil and Fresnoy an advance of about fourteen miles had been made. The tide was now flowing, and it was not to slacken until the Germans, having lost all hope of victory, begged us to cease fighting, and meet them in the council chamber, where they hoped by trickery to win those successes which they could not attain on the tented field.

CHAPTER XIII.

STILL ADVANCING.

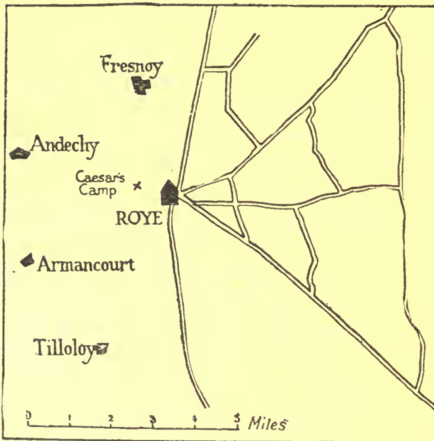
IN Chapters X. and XI. I told you the story of the first three days' fighting between Albert and Montdidier. You will remember that our Fourth Army and a portion of the First French Army on its right advanced with Tanks on the morning of Thursday, 8th August, and completely broke the front of the armies commanded by Hutier and Marwitz. A splendid advance was made in front of Amiens, though it was somewhat checked on the extreme left, where the enemy recaptured Chipilly hill, from which he could shell the main road running eastward.

Next day, Friday, thanks to American reinforcements, Chipilly was recovered, and the check to our advance was removed. Australians and Canadians pushed on to the height of Lihons, from which the railway junction of Chaulnes was at their mercy. This meant that the main communications with Montdidier were cut. At the same time the right of the French army went forward, and by Friday evening Montdidier lay in a deep and narrow pocket. On Saturday the Germans, having rallied and been reinforced, made many heavy counter-attacks on the north of the line. But on the south the French completely surrounded Montdidier, which surrendered at noon. Following up their advantage, they drove the enemy before them in something like rout, and by evening had reached a point five miles east of the town.

On the morning of Sunday, 11th August, the fourth day of the battle, the enemy brought up his reserves, and made a strenuous effort to prevent the Allies from capturing Chaulnes and Roye. Already, as you know, our troops held Lihons, from which they could shell the railway junction of Chaulnes; they had also cut the line to the south of the town. At the

opening of the battle, Chaulnes was important because it was the junction of the single-line railway which fed Montdidier. When that town fell on Saturday, Chaulnes was no longer of any particular value to the enemy. He nevertheless fought hard to retain it, because, 4,000 yards behind it, there was an important cross-road by which he served his front.

For much the same reason he made a great effort to hold on to Roye, which is an even more important road-centre than Chaulnes. Some seven thousand yards east of the town there is a very important cross-road from which five highways run, fanwise, to meet in Roye. All day Sunday the battle raged in front of Chaulnes and Roye. The French First Army was fast closing in on the latter town, and was holding the village of Fresnoy, about two and a half miles to the north, and that of Andechy, some three miles to the north-west. Fierce counter-attacks enabled the Germans to win back Fresnoy and also Proyat, which stands six miles north-west of Chaulnes. Meanwhile, south of the Amiens-Roye road, Débeney's troops, moving along the Montdidier-Roye railway, captured Tilloloy, another village to the south-west of Roye. Next day, Monday, 12th August, Proyat was recaptured by our Colonial troops, and the French made a further push forward to the south of Roye.



Map to illustrate the French Attack on Roye.

By the evening of 13th August, the sixth day of the battle, Rawlinson and Débeney between them had captured more than twenty-eight thousand prisoners and six hundred guns, besides several thousand machine guns and trench mortars. The captured material included three complete trains and vast stocks of stores.

Here is a little map which will show you how the French closed in on Roye. You observe that they were trying to encircle it. They had won and lost Fresnoy, but were holding

on to Andechy, Armancourt, and Tilloloy. Between Andechy and Armancourt they were within 6,500 yards of the town. Less than a mile to the west of the place there are ancient earthworks, probably made long before Roman times, but known as Cæsar's Camp. On the 17th the French captured the trenches, and it was clear that the fall of Roye could not long be delayed. It fell ten days later.

Examine the map on page 93, and notice that while our line south of Albert had been swung eastward until it had made an angle of about sixty degrees with its former direction, there had been no forward movement of the Allies north of the town. Any such advance was unnecessary, for, as the line south of Albert swung eastward, it outflanked the German positions to the north and made them more and more dangerous to hold. On 8th August, when our armies were set in motion all the way from Ville to Biaches, the Germans lay west of the Ancre at Beaumont-Hamel, Serre, Pusieux, and Bucquoy. By the 14th August our advance to the south-east of Albert forced Marwitz to retire from these positions across the Ancre. He was at once followed up, and our patrols lay close to the left bank of the river.

Now we must switch off our attention to the other end of the line and see what the Third French Army was doing. It lay to the south-east of Débeney's army, facing the hills of Lassigny. The value of these hills to the French was that from the summits they would be able to overlook the plain to the north, and command the roads by which the enemy supplied and reinforced his troops in the southern section. They therefore set themselves to seize all the high points along the northern edge of the hills. By the evening of Saturday, General Humbert was pushing his way into the heart of the highlands; he had reached Conchy, five miles west of Lassigny, and Ressons, on the Matz. On Sunday his left wing pushed along the river towards the Oise, and on the 14th captured Ribecourt, on the main road between Compiègne and Noyon. Next day he seized the highest point of the hills, and occupied the farm which there stands in a forest clearing. On the same day he forced his way into Thiescourt Wood, to the north-east of Ribecourt, but had to meet a strong resistance. The enemy was making a stubborn stand along the Compiègne-Noyon road, for the purpose of saving Noyon.

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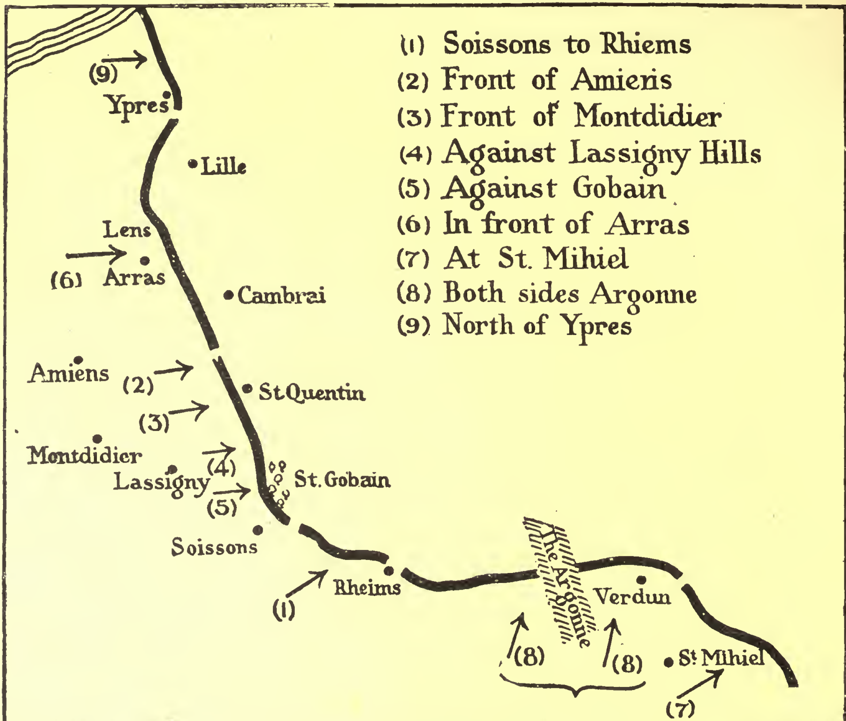
Before I conclude this chapter I want you to notice that the various attacks made by Foch on different parts of the line from 18th July to 17th August, the date on which I break off my story, were not random strokes, but part of a well-planned scheme which step by step developed the attack along the whole battle-front from the North Sea to the Vosges. Between 18th July and 5th August the Marne salient was flattened out. Three days after the Germans had begun to make a stand



Map to illustrate Foch's Offensives between July 18th and the end of September.

on the Vesle, a new attack, which took them completely by surprise, was begun by the British Fourth Army in front of Amiens. The following day the First French Army, to the south of the British, went forward to the capture of Montdidier. Then, on Saturday, 10th August, the Third French Army, on the right of the First Army, made its stroke; and the whole front was in action for forty miles—all the way from Ville, on the Ancre, to Ribecourt, near the Oise.

We shall see as our story proceeds that on the 18th of the same month Mangin with the Tenth French Army made a thrust between the Oise and the Ladies' Road. Then three days later the British Third Army, fifty miles away to the north, chimed in with a lunge from the front of Arras towards Bapaume. By this time the Germans were being fiercely assailed all the way from Rheims to the Scarpe. September was but eleven days old when the Americans struck on the St. Mihiel salient to the south of Verdun. On the 26th the French and Americans leaped forward between the Meuse and the middle of Champagne, and two days later British and Belgians attacked in Flanders. Thus by the end of September the whole front was ablaze from the Meuse to the Yser.

Look at this diagram, and notice how the hammer-blows fell alternately north and south. As soon as the assault was held on the Vesle, Foch struck fifty miles away to the north. Then with successive blows he fell upon the Germans in the gap between the new battle-front and Soissons. This done, he set his forces in motion still farther north, in front of Arras, and followed up this new attack with a stroke south of Verdun, 170 miles away as the aeroplane flies. Then he struck in between Rheims and the Meuse, and almost immediately began a new offensive in Flanders, at the extreme north end of the line. This remarkable succession of widely separated onslaughts completely bewildered and baffled the enemy. Ludendorff was in a constant state of suspense, uncertain where the next blow would fall, and without the reserves to meet them. In later chapters you will read the story of these offensives, which ensured the final defeat of the Central Powers and the triumph of the Allies.

CHAPTER XIV.

HAMMER-BLOWS.

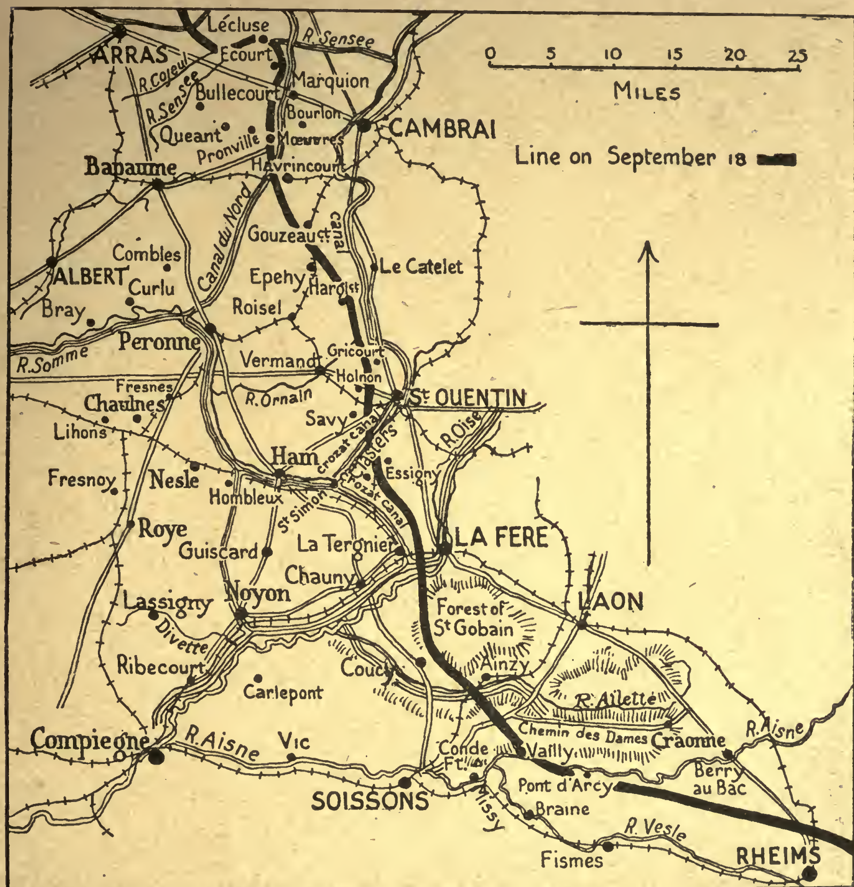
WE now approach a period of the war in which it is almost impossible to give you a connected account of the progress of the Allied armies. Between 17th August and the end of September the whole line from the Vosges to the Vimy Ridge was ablaze with fierce fighting. Offensive followed offensive in quick succession ; all were linked together, and all contributed in forcing the Germans to retreat into regions so far untouched by the war. Hammer-blows rained upon the enemy all along the line, and every day saw an advance. The story now grows so complicated that I cannot pretend to give you a clear picture of the whole line in action. Never were six weeks so crowded with incident as those which I am now about to describe.

On 18th August Marshal Foch let loose Mangin's Tenth Army, for a thrust in the angle between the Lower Aisne and the Oise. His object was to reach the Ailette, and thus turn the Chemin des Dames position. A farther advance in the direction of Laon would outflank the great Forest of Gobain, the southern buttress of the German line right away to the gray waters of the North Sea.

On the 18th the Tenth Army advanced about a mile and a quarter, but next day went ahead at a great rate. A day later the Ailette was reached, and the French were securely established on the Hill of Cuts, from which they could overlook the Oise valley for many miles and shell the highroad leading to Noyon, only five miles away. This advance compelled the enemy to withdraw from Lassigny. By the evening of the 21st Mangin's bag of prisoners numbered 10,000. The Third Army was in touch with him on his left, and the whole

line was engaged from Rheims to Ville on the Ancre, a distance of 110 miles.

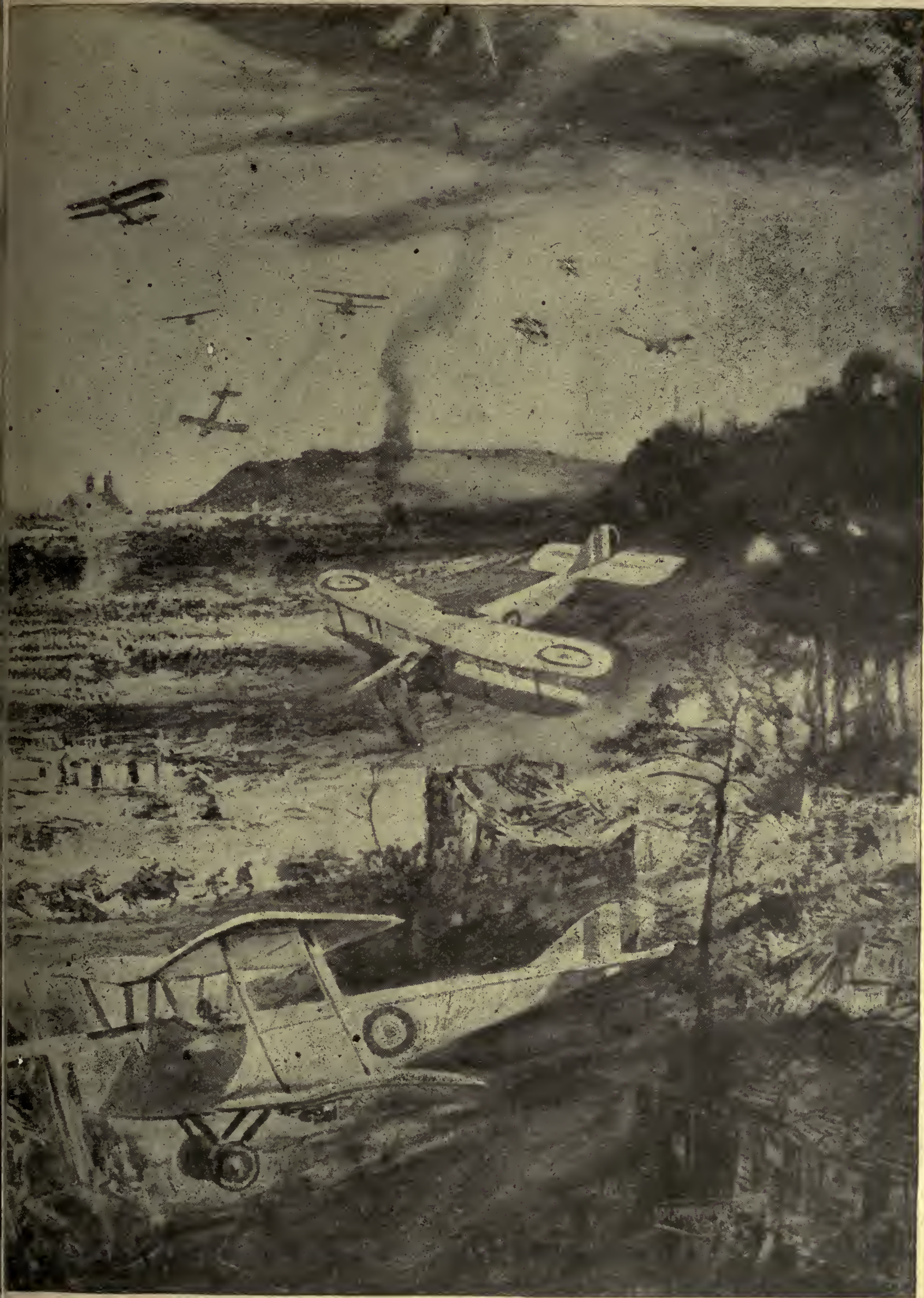
While Mangin marked time for a space, Foch delivered his next blow. On the morning of the 21st Byng's Third Army, operating in front of Arras from Beaucourt, on the west bank



Map illustrating the Fighting from the Scarpe to Rheims.

of the Ancre, to Moyenville, south of the Cojeul river, went forward with great spirit. The attack was launched on a front of ten miles, and was made with the assistance of Tanks. The troops engaged were all from the British Isles, with the exception of a detachment of New Zealanders. The front-line

Enemy Columns in Retreat across the Oise: Bombing
(From the picture by D. Macpherson.



Squadrons attacking the Retreating Germans.
(By permission of The Sphere.)

positions of the enemy were rushed, between two thousand and three thousand prisoners were gathered in, and by nightfall our men were close up to the Arras-Albert railway. They swept across the old battlefields on which in earlier struggles they had won the ground painfully inch by inch and with terrible loss. But their progress was by no means a triumphal march. Round about Miraumont there was a stubborn resistance, and at Albert-le-Grand, where the railway runs through a deep cutting, and the banks were studded with machine guns, we had all our work cut out to make headway.

By this time, in all the long battle line between Arras and Rheims, there was only one sector which was quiet—namely, that in front of Albert. On Thursday, the 22nd, and Friday, the 23rd, the right of the British Third Army pushed forward between the Ancre and the Somme from just north of Bray to Albert. The front attacked was short—a little over six miles. The attack was completely successful: all the objectives were reached at an early hour, Albert was cleared of the enemy, and fighting was now in progress all the way from Arras to Rheims. On Saturday we were on the outskirts of Croiselles and the ruins of Bapaume, and in three days had counted 14,000 prisoners. Five weeks' operations had given us between 110,000 and 120,000 prisoners and about two thousand guns. All the enemy's available reserves had been drawn into the fight, and everywhere we were attacking and he was defending.

I have already explained that I cannot in these pages follow the progress of the Allied armies step by step. You must study the map and notice the progress made. All along the line we swept through places associated with the fiercest fighting during earlier stages of the war. For example, you have not forgotten the terrible struggles which took place in 1916 at Thiepval, Fricourt, Mametz, Contalmaison, the Butt of Warlencourt, and High Wood. Between Friday night, the 23rd, and Sunday morning, the 25th of August, we carried all these places, though not without hard fighting. German prisoners were astounded at the speed of our advance. "We thought," said one battalion commander, "that the British army was finished." They learned to their cost that it was even more vigorous than it had ever been. No doubt the rapidity of our advance and the saving of many precious lives were due to our Tanks. The Germans were thoroughly afraid of them.

Up to the evening of 25th August there was no sign that the enemy intended to withdraw the armies of von Below and von der Marwitz to the Hindenburg Line. Reinforcements had been hurried up to the battle-front on the 22nd and 23rd, after General Byng had launched his attack, and it was fully expected that our advance would be held up while the German engineers constructed new lines of defence astride the Somme valley. For forty-eight hours our advance slowed down, but the pause was only temporary. Our Third and Fourth Armies were speedily on the move again, and were striking so heavily and so constantly that the enemy could nowhere make a prolonged stand.

On Monday, 26th August, we began another offensive that finally decided the enemy to fall back on the Hindenburg Line. On that day the right wing of General Horne's First Army swept forward to the north and south of the Scarpe between the Arras-Cambrai road and the Vimy Ridge. For many weeks Arras had been a No Man's Land, so continually shelled by the enemy that our troops could not leave it or advance along the road to Douai. When the full story can be told, we shall learn of a remarkable engineering work which enabled our men to make their advance. To the north of the Canadians lay the glorious 51st Division, which had covered itself with glory on many a battlefield, and had won the premier laurels of the war.

At three in the morning the Canadians went forward with the cry, "Monchy before breakfast!" By nightfall they had not only recovered the Monchy plateau, which stands high above the rolling country on the south side of the river, and had been used by the enemy as an observation point since its capture in March, but had passed the sunken road at Fampoux, with its tiers of dug-outs, and had reached Rœux. Next day they crossed the old German lines which had been held since 1914,* and reached Vis-en-Artois. Meanwhile the Germans were making heavy counter-attacks against our troops in front of Bapaume, but all were repulsed. South of the Somme we fought our way steadily forward, and on the 27th General Débeney occupied Chaulnes and Roye, and crossed the Péronne-Roye road.

Next day, 28th August, the effect of Horne's thrust against the German right flank, and the continual pressure of the Allies all along the line, began to tell, and the enemy retreated more

* See picture diagram, pp. 126–127.

rapidly than heretofore both to the north and to the south of the Somme. You have not forgotten, I am sure, the famous "Switch" line which Hindenburg had constructed from Drocourt to Quéant. After the loss of Vimy Ridge in April 1917 he dug this strong system of five trench lines, and fortified it with broad belts of barbed wire, so as to prevent our troops pushing their way up the Scarpe valley to Douai. Now the Canadians approached the southern end of the Switch, while north and south of the Somme the Australians pressed on towards Péronne, and Débeney's troops, moving very rapidly, passed through Nesle. Humbert at this time was within two miles of Noyon. On the 29th New Zealanders entered Bapaume, after a good deal of stiff fighting on the outskirts of the town.

On the same day General Humbert reoccupied Noyon, the junction of six main roads. The Germans had strongly manned Mont St. Simeon, which dominates the town a mile away, and had instructed their troops to hold it to the last. The place, however, was encircled by three famous regiments which carry the Cross of the Legion of Honour on their banners. In spite of a terrible machine-gun fire and a violent counter-attack, they carried the surrounding villages and the suburbs, and so completely ringed the town with steel and flame that the enemy was forced to retire. Before doing so he reduced the place to ruins.

I must now describe the struggle for the Switch line. Look at the picture diagram on pages 126–127. The view is taken from a point above the little town of Bailleul,* which stands about four miles north-east of Arras. You are supposed to be looking towards the south-east—that is, along the Hindenburg Line towards St. Quentin. Running across the middle of the picture is the road from Arras to Cambrai. North of the road you see Monchy, and still further north the Scarpe, running eastward through a series of pools and marshes. Crossing the road, the Sensée, and the Scarpe, you see the system of trenches forming the Switch line. Notice that to the west of it stand the villages of Bullecourt and Hendecourt. Bullecourt is already well known to you as the scene of tremendous fighting by the Australians. Right behind the Switch line is the village of Villers-les-Cagnicourt, and farther east, crossing the Arras-Cambrai road at Marquion, is the Canal du Nord.

* Not to be confounded with the better-known Bailleul in Flanders.

South of Marquion stands Mœuvres, already famous in our story, and soon to be the scene of notable heroism.

On 29th August General Horne redistributed his divisions. He placed the Canadians in the centre astride the Arras-Cambrai road, with the 4th Division on their left and Ferguson's 17th Corps on their right. Next day the attack was launched. The Canadians rushed through the enemy's defences at Hendecourt, and reached the Switch line. All day there was violent fighting round about Bullecourt, Quéant, and Riencourt, where the ground was crossed and recrossed by old trenches and honeycombed with tunnels. The Germans, holding these positions, fought to the last.

All through the night and all the next day the battle continued. The 56th and 57th Divisions held on like grim death to Bullecourt and Hendecourt, which they had captured on the first day of the attack, and now were reinforced by the 52nd Division. On the night of 1st September Riencourt was captured, and next day the 52nd, 57th, and 63rd Divisions carried Quéant, and rushed right through the Switch line. Meanwhile the Canadians, on their left, with the assistance of a third division, had smashed right through the line farther north, and had carried the villages of Villers-lez-Lagnicourt and Dury, between the Switch line and the Canal du Nord. By the night of 2nd September the victory was complete. The Switch line had been pierced along a twelve-mile front, the Germans had been put to flight, and 10,000 prisoners had been taken.

A correspondent tells us that on 1st September the Germans expected that something big was to be attempted next day, and in order to forestall it began making repeated counter-attacks. One very heavy assault was hurled at a Canadian "kiltie" brigade at 4.30 p.m., and another at midnight against Western troops on their left. Both were cut up, and the enemy lost heavily, some three hundred prisoners being taken in the course of the two attacks.

"By dawn the Canadian Corps was ready to burst through the Germans' strongest trench system in France and Flanders. When the attack opened, at 5 a.m., the third stage of the Battle of Arras had begun. By nightfall we were 3,000 yards beyond the Drocourt-Quéant line. A few minutes after eight our light-gun batteries were blazing away a mile east of it, and the heavies were trundling up in two huge bulky waves. As early as 8.30 traffic passed over it for a thousand yards on the Cambrai road."

Panorama to illustrate the British Break-through of the

The day's fighting had given us the ruins of six villages, 4,500 prisoners, several batteries of guns, hundreds of machine guns, and a huge stock of material. The Germans had never expected us to break through, for the town mayor of Dury and his staff were asleep when we entered the village. That night the enemy fled under cover of darkness to take up a line east of the Nord Canal, leaving little groups of machine gunners to hamper our advance. These were quickly mopped up, and by 4th September our line was established along the west bank of the canal.

Before I pass on to describe the subsequent fighting, let me mention the British captures during the month of August. We had taken 57,318 prisoners, including 1,283 officers; 657 German guns, including over 150 heavy guns; more than 5,750 machine guns, and over 1,000 trench mortars. Amongst other captures were three trains and nine locomotives, numerous ammunition dumps, containing many hundred thousand rounds of gun, trench mortar, and small-arms ammunition, as well as immense quantities of war material of every kind.

The Germans now lay behind the Canal du Nord, and our men were following up fast. Between the canal and Cambrai

Switch Line during the First Week of September.

lay the rolling country across which Byng's Tanks had made their great push in November 1917. You will remember that during the advance we entered Bourlon Wood, within five miles of Cambrai, but that our troops were too few in numbers to hold their gains. We were forced to fall back behind the Canal du Nord, and thus yield up about half the ground we had won. The subsequent German onset, which began on March 21, 1918, drove us still farther west, until we were lying behind Arras and Albert. Since 26th August we had pushed forward in this sector a distance of seventeen or eighteen miles, and at the village opposite to Marquion were only six miles from Cambrai. At midnight on 4th September we entered the town of Mœuvres, from which subsequently a fierce counter-attack dislodged us for two days. You observe from the picture diagram that on 8th September our line crossed the Scarpe near Plouvain, and then ran along the west bank of the canal to Havrincourt Wood, which fell to us on 7th September.

Now we must learn what was happening in other parts of the line. While Horne's First Army was breaking through the Switch line, our Third and Fourth Armies and the two French armies on their right were driving the enemy back between

Bapaume and the Oise. After capturing Bapaume Byng's army reached the line Roisel-Havrincourt on the 6th. Meanwhile the Australians of Rawlinson's army moving along the north bank of the Somme captured Péronne. By 5th September Rawlinson's army, working hand in hand with the First French Army on their right, had crossed the Canal du Nord. Progress then slowed down, and it was not until the 11th that the leading columns reached Holnon Wood, where Gough's army was pierced on 22nd March. Six days later the village of Holnon fell into our hands. Next day, along with the French, an attack was made on a fourteen-mile front from Gouzeaucourt to Holnon, and the outer defences of the Hindenburg Line were carried for two or three miles. Eight thousand prisoners and a number of guns were captured. Meanwhile Débeney on our right drew nearer to St. Quentin, while the British and the French began enveloping the city.

At this point I must break off the story to tell you something of the progress of the French armies farther south. By the 18th of the month French troops were only two miles from La Fère. Meanwhile Mangin was clearing the enemy out of the angle between the Oise and the Aisne. In the tangled country he had hard work to advance; but by 29th August he was across the Ailette in several places, and Degoutte, commanding the Sixth French Army, was able to push back the enemy from the north and east of Soissons.

On the 30th the heights overlooking what is called the Vauxillion defile * were captured. On 1st September Mangin managed to enter the Forest of Couchy. On the 7th a plateau commanding the western end of the Ladies' Road was captured, and the French entered Vauxillion. Next day they seized Mont des Singes, just south of the Oise canal, and were now overlooking the railway running through the Vauxillion defile to Laon. This meant that the Germans on the Aisne were outflanked. Franco-American troops drove them out of Vailly and took 4,000 prisoners on the day that the Mont des Singes was occupied.

Foch was aiming at Laon. Once it was in Allied hands the Hindenburg Line would be outflanked and useless. At Mont des Singes Mangin was within ten miles of Laon.

* See picture diagram, Vol. VIII., p. 98.

CHAPTER XV.

SOLDIERS' STORIES OF THE ADVANCE.

ON several occasions I have referred in words of high praise to the 51st Division of Highland Territorials. It first made its name during the hard fighting of 1917, and the Germans placed it first on the list of British divisions to be feared. In March 1918, during the terribly heavy onslaughts of the Germans, it bore the brunt of some of the heaviest attacks, and won the special thanks of the Commander-in-Chief. On 28th March, during very critical hours, it saved Arras. On 9th April it was called upon to stem the victorious Germans, who had broken through the Portuguese line on the Lys. On 20th July it was one of the British divisions which fought along with the French south-west of Rheims. In the furious struggles which took place in the Courton Wood and along the Ardre it won the admiration and warm thanks of the French commander. After all these long and arduous battles the 51st might well have claimed repose ; but, as you have read in the previous chapter, it attacked north of the Scarpe on 26th August, and in five days of successful fighting captured Rœux, Greenland Hill, and Plouvain.

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A story is told of Lancashire troops cut off near Miraumont, and surrounded by large numbers of the enemy. An aeroplane swooped over them, and dropped a message encouraging them to hold on, as relief was coming. They held on doggedly, and shortly afterwards saw their comrades advancing in a counter-attack. When the Lancashires were rescued from their perilous situation they went forward with the advancing wave, and had the satisfaction of driving the enemy before them.

* * * * * * *

To the south of Bapaume Welsh troops played a large part in the operations which brought about the fall of that famous town. They waded the Ancre up to their necks, and, advancing beyond their barrage, took Usna Hill at the bayonet point, stormed the fortress position of Thiepval, and with other troops crossed the Pozières ridge, and continued their progress through Contalmaison, La Boiselle, and Ovillers, into Mametz Wood. A short time later they sent back the message: "Mametz Wood captured by the Welsh, 1916; recaptured, 1918. Hurrah!" The same doughty warriors also took Delville Wood, and passed through Ginchy, where the Irish fought so gallantly in 1916.

* * * * * * *

Australians also took part in the recapture of Pozières, which they stormed during the Somme battle of 1916. A correspondent tells us that as the men from "down under" swept through the ruins of the place they saw the crosses and graves of their comrades just as they were before the great German offensive of March 1918. Many of the crosses were scarred with shrapnel, and some had been cut through by shell; but the Germans, as far as could be seen, had treated the cemeteries with respect. "By the windmill still stands the dark wooden cross of the 2nd Australian Division on the summit of the whole Somme battlefield. Heavy shells have shaken this cross, and have half loosed it from its stone pyramid, but it still rises there beside the great road which the 2nd Division won. Beside it to the north and south, along the summit, can still be seen the small white crosses to nameless Australians, who two years ago fought and fell on that terrible hill crest."

* * * * * * *

The Canal du Nord figures largely in the narrative of the war from November 1917 onwards. It was constructed after 1902, in order to lessen the distance for coal traffic between Dunkirk and Paris. The work, which was estimated to cost £2,500,000, was uncompleted when the war broke out. The first section, twenty-five miles long, runs from Arleux, on the Canal de la Sensée, to the Canal de la Somme, which it meets about a mile and a half below Péronne. The second section, from Péronne to near Ham, makes use of part of the bed of the Somme Canal. The third section continues the waterway to the Oise at Noyon. The water supply was to be drawn from

Released from Captivity: the Inhabitants of a Recaptured French Village making Friends with Canadian Soldiers.

(*Canadian official picture.*)

the Somme and the Sensée, and in the first section was to be pumped into the canal by a central power station about midway between Arleux and Péronne. In this section the cutting appears like a great gash across the landscape, and, seen from the east of Bapaume, shows white where it runs through the chalk. The brick-lined bed is empty of water, and along its banks are spoil heaps ; beyond the canal run the lines of trenches forming the Hindenburg system. From the tops of the spoil banks Cambrai can be seen in clear weather.

* * * * * * *

A strange incident took place during the rapid advance described in the previous chapter. A German officer surrendered to a British officer, and, after scanning his captor carefully, said, " Excuse me, but isn't your name —— ? " It was. " I thought so," said the German. " You and I were shooting big game together in British Columbia in such and such a year." A similar incident took place in the American lines, where a man captured a prisoner who had been a classmate with him in a German university before the war.

* * * * * * *

Four troopers of a British cavalry regiment were fired upon by a machine-gun post. At once they drove in their spurs and dashed towards it. As they charged one fell, then another, then a third, until only one was left. He went on right into the post, sabred every gunner, and then came back, walking beside his horse as quietly as if nothing had happened. A Canadian officer witnessed this piece of heroism, but lost sight of the man, whose deed thus went unrecognized by his military superiors.

* * * * * * *

A terrible story is told of a fiendish trap laid for our men by the retreating Germans. On the door of a house in a recaptured village British troops saw, as they marched through, a kitten nailed by its paws to a door. It was mewing piteously, and was struggling to release itself. One of our soldiers, full of pity for the poor creature, at once ran out of the ranks to release it. He pulled out the nails that pierced its claws ; but as he did so there was a sudden explosion, and his mutilated body was flung across the street. A hidden charge had been so arranged as to explode the moment the nails were withdrawn. A more revolting piece of brutality cannot be imagined,

and we should hesitate to believe the story were we not assured by trustworthy eye-witnesses that it is true in every particular.

* * * * * * *

In the previous chapter I told you that Mœuvres was won, lost, and regained. I must now tell you how seven Highlanders held out in the place for the two days during which the enemy occupied it, and how in the end they were relieved by our advancing troops. On the afternoon of Tuesday, 17th September, the Germans made a heavy attack on Mœuvres, which we had entered at midnight on 4th September. Scottish battalions of the 52nd Lowland Brigade, who were holding the place, were forced back to a line west of the village. One of our posts established near the cemetery was cut off. It consisted of Corporal David Ferguson Hunter and six men of the 1/5th Battalion Highland Light Infantry. The battalion commander naturally supposed that the seven men had either been put out of action or had surrendered. Two days later, when the place was recaptured, the gallant Scots were still holding on to their position, and, though terribly worn out, with haggard faces and bloodshot eyes, were as full of fight as ever.

* * * * * * *

The story of this magnificent stand is thus told by a French newspaper: "The Germans having surrounded the Highlanders, called upon them to surrender, and offered to spare their lives; but they refused to hold up their hands, and clung to the concrete ruins of their dug-out with desperate valour. Their three machine guns ground out death for forty-eight hours without a stop." During all this time the heroes had neither sleep nor food. In vain the enemy tried to get within bombing distance; every time they were driven back until a belt of corpses lay around the little heroic band. The corporal, in simple words, told a correspondent that he and his comrades had no provisions, and no water except what they had in their flasks. "I knew," he said, "that our comrades had been obliged to retire; but *I had received no orders to retreat*, so we decided to wait and see. The men with me were splendid fellows. I sent two messengers back for assistance, and afterwards learned that one of them was killed. The other arrived at headquarters wounded, and too late for help to be dispatched before the enemy advanced again. The Germans attacked us three times by the light of the moon, but we beat them back

by our rifle-fire. They hoped to reduce us by starvation; but at last our artillery forced them to fall back." The only reference the corporal made to himself was a regret that his wife and two boys in his little home in Fife would be disappointed because his leave was delayed.

* * * * * * *

It was at seven o'clock on the evening of Thursday, 19th September, when our counter-attack on Mœuvres began. The Scots swept through the town, and not only drove the Germans out of it, but pushed them back to the line from which they had delivered their assault. You can imagine the round after round of cheering and the hearty handshakes with which the heroes were greeted by their comrades. The relieved men had, to use a Scottish word, "tholed" the slashing rainstorms without shelter, and their clothes were sodden; they were ravenous with hunger, and had only three iron rations left; but they had pulled through, and had added another laurel leaf to the fame of their regiment, which has always been distinguished for striking personal valour. One correspondent likened their stand to that made by the eighty heroes who held Rorke's Drift through the night of January 24, 1879, against four thousand Zulus. In its way the exploit of the Seven Men of Mœuvres was just as heroic. You will read in a later chapter that the gallant corporal was awarded a well-earned Victoria Cross.

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On 14th September Sir Douglas Haig published a dispatch naming those divisions of the British army which had performed many gallant deeds since 8th August. In this dispatch he tells us that most of the divisions mentioned had been advancing over the same ground on which they had met and finally checked the enemy's great offensive in March. "During the past few weeks they have shown, without exception, that the tremendous strain sustained by them earlier in the year with so much courage and resolution has in no way diminished their splendid fighting spirit. . . . On the same battlefields on which they withstood the heaviest assault the British army has yet been called upon to face, all have fought side by side with the splendid divisions of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, with a courage, gallantry, and enterprise only equalled by their success."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST GREAT AMERICAN BATTLE.

WHEN the British army was retreating before the great German onset of March 1918, General Pershing announced that the American troops in France would be brigaded with the British and French for the purpose of bringing the enemy's advance to a standstill. He added, however, that he held himself free to withdraw these troops at such time as seemed convenient to himself, in order to build up an American army which might operate as one great unit. We are now to read how this American army had its baptism of fire, and how it carried through its first great venture with complete success.

In former chapters you have seen how Foch flung the various armies under his command into the battle one by one, and how the whole front from the Vimy Ridge to Rheims became a fighting zone. So far there had been no important advance between the Vimy Ridge and the North Sea, nor had any special effort been made at the other end of the line south of Verdun. The time had now come when these extremities of the line were also to blaze up into battle fury.

Look carefully at the map on page 139, and find the great fortress of Verdun, round which the trench lines made a rounded corner. To the south of Verdun you see a sharp, wedge-shaped salient, with its apex touching the river Meuse at St. Mihiel. If you turn back to page 71 of our fourth volume, you will learn that this salient was formed as far back as September 1914. The Germans then made a thrust which carried them to the Meuse, and gave them a bridgehead at St. Mihiel, and another on the left bank of the river at Chauvoncourt. To these bridgeheads they clung persistently, despite many French attacks, which smashed the bridges over the river

Capture of a German Field Howitzer Battery: an Incident

(*From a sketch by Charles de Grineau. By*

Aircraft and Tanks played a large part in our great advance. The Tanks flattened out the great belts flew over the retreating Germans, causing great destruction and confusion by means of bombs and in the background, and aeroplanes are flying low over the guns and teams of a howitzer battery which

of the Fighting to the East of the Canal du Nord.

permission of The Illustrated London News.)

of wire and charged the trenches, driving the enemy into hasty retreat. The squadrons of aeroplanes machine-gun fire. Our illustration shows the two arms co-operating. "Whippets" are seen advancing was afterwards captured.

and pinched the salient closer and closer, until between Fresnes and Pont-à-Mousson its base was but a little more than twenty-five miles across, while its depth was about fifteen miles.

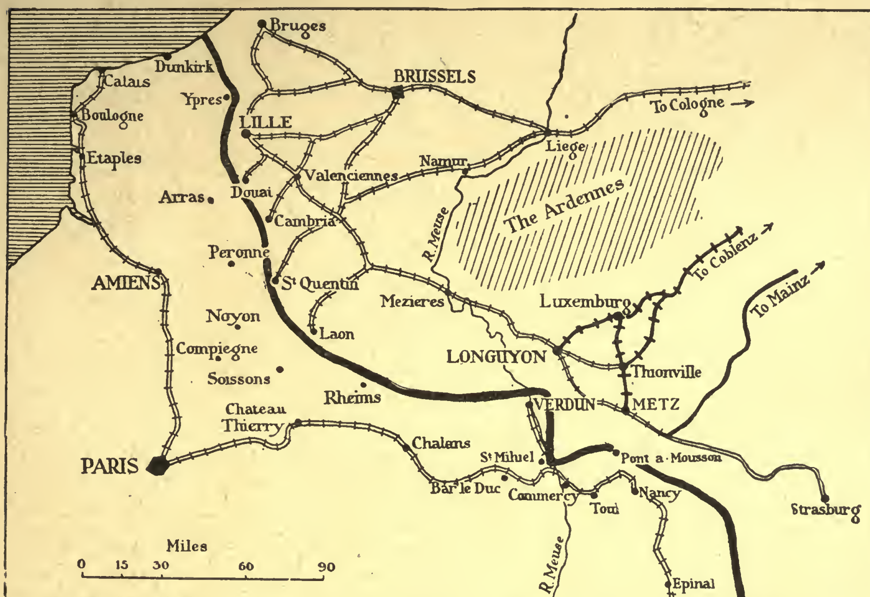
What was the object of the Germans in holding on to this salient? A map of France shows you a double-track railway, running from Paris through Château-Thierry, Châlons, and Bar-le-Duc to Nancy, and thence along the right bank of the Meuse to Belfort. This railway was of the utmost importance to the Allies, because it enabled them to move their troops rapidly to all parts of the line between Rheims and the borders of Switzerland. The capture of St. Mihiel by the Germans enabled them to shell the railway between Bar-le-Duc and the river, and thus prevent the French from using it. A round-about route had to be taken, and the region surrounding Nancy had to be served by small side-lines. But this was not the main reason why the Germans refused to budge from St. Mihiel. Their main object was to cut off the Verdun corner.

From St. Mihiel they were able to shell the railway running along the right bank of the Meuse, and prevent traffic from coming up the Meuse valley to Verdun. During the terrible battles in front of that fortress the French had mainly to supply their troops by means of a vast fleet of motor lorries. Had they been obliged to depend upon the railways Verdun would have been lost.

Now let us study the railway communications of the enemy. Look again at the map, and notice the hill and forest country of the Ardennes, across which there is no important railway line. Between that difficult region and the Meuse you see a sheaf of railways which gives communication between the German bases and all parts of the front right away to Bruges. North of the Ardennes are other railways linking the German bases with all parts of the western face of the front. So long as the French armies were well to the west of the Ardennes they had a multitude of cross railways at their disposal, and the great interruption of the Ardennes was of no particular consequence. But if we could cut off the St. Mihiel salient, we should be able to bring the great railway junction of Longuyon under fire, and thus prevent the enemy from using the southern sheaf of railways. He would, of course, still be able to use the small supply lines and the roads running through the Ardennes; but having lost the main

railways, he would be greatly hampered, and would be thrown back for the transport of his big guns and heavy ammunition to the railways running through Belgium.

So you see that, if we attacked the St. Mihiel salient, we should threaten the German communications south of the Ardennes. As these were all-important to the enemy, he would have to borrow troops from other parts of the line to meet our blow. As you know, he had his hands full all along the front as far as the Vimy Ridge, and his reserves had all been flung into the battle. He could not make an effective



Map to illustrate the Railway Systems North and South of the Ardennes.

resistance in the St. Mihiel salient without weakening himself elsewhere, and giving us an advantage in the weakened district. For these reasons Marshal Foch determined to strike on both faces of the St. Mihiel wedge, and he entrusted the task to the newly-formed American army.

On page 141 is a map of the salient as it was on the morning of 12th September, when General Pershing set his forces in motion. He massed the bulk of his troops along a ten-mile front, extending from the point of the arrow on the map to the west of Pont-à-Mousson to the Forest of Apremont, where

his right linked up with the French, who were entrenched round the apex of the salient. On the western face Americans and French, brigaded together, were to make a secondary push from Les Eparges down to Chauvoncourt. This attack was to be on a smaller scale than that on the south side of the salient; and it could not be expected to go far, because, as you observe from the map, it would have to operate in hilly, wooded country. The main attack had open and far easier ground to cross.

A violent bombardment began at 1 a.m. on the 12th, and lasted until 5 a.m. Then Pershing let loose the first waves of his eager infantry to the west of the Priests' Wood. The moment the bombardment opened, the Germans within the salient began to retire. They had to make their way through paths and lanes, and they could not retreat very rapidly. The Americans went forward behind their Tanks at a great pace, and five hours later had reached Thiaucourt, where they cut off the German retreat along the light railway between that town and St. Mihiel. At 8 a.m. the second assault was launched farther to the west. In this part of the line the ground was not so favourable for the advance, and two Austro-Hungarian divisions holding the front put up a strong defence. General Pershing had hoped that the two attacks would meet and close the salient at Vigneulles and Hattonchatel; but the Austro-Hungarian defences delayed the more western advance, with the consequence that two German divisions in the apex managed to get away safely.

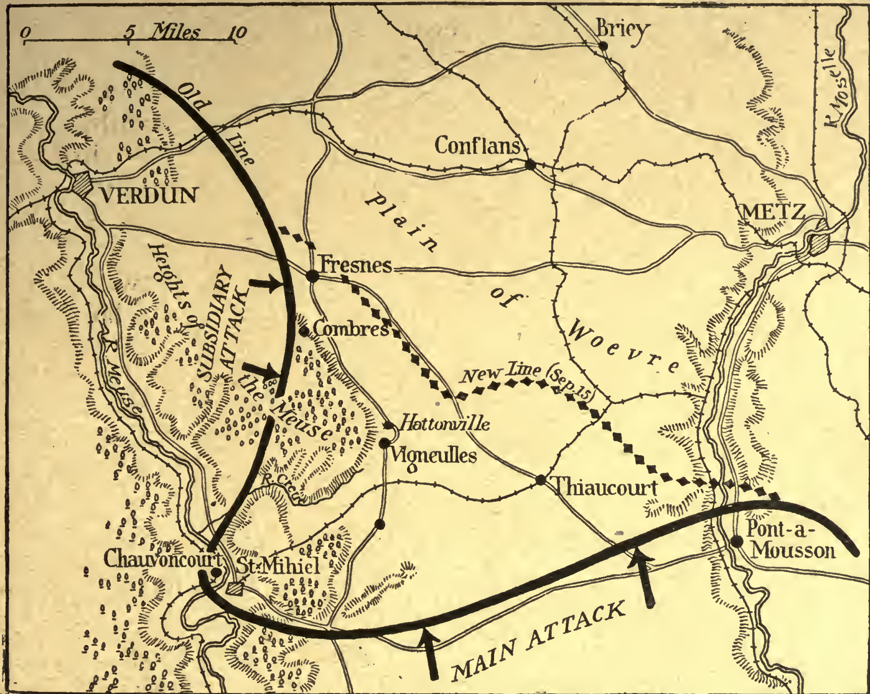
An American correspondent thus describes the advance :—

"The Americans went forward with the steadiness of a flood, trickling into the woods on one side and pouring out of them on the other; spreading on either side of a village and overwhelming it; breaking against the sides of a hill and mounting gradually over the top, with cold storms of raw sleet occasionally blotting out the battle as completely as if a curtain had been drawn over it.

"From under its ragged skirts the Americans reappeared, still moving forward as if by clockwork, and always well ahead of the scheduled time; shaking the drenching rain from their packs, slithering in the mud that spread over their ankles, but still going forward; while floating back along the flood, like flotsam, came ceaseless lines of prisoners who had been swamped in its course—Germans and Austrians, Austrians and Germans, till the hundreds mounted to thousands. On whatever track one looked there were sure to be prisoners. . . .

"The mud had proved too much for many of the Tanks, and the rainstorms swept the aeroplanes out of the sky; but still the Americans went

on, with just the booming of a few big guns behind them and the melting away of the enemy in front. It was not quite like that. Of course there was plenty of fierce fighting. The woods, which for a while held back part of the line, were not cleared without a struggle. The mud beyond was little short of appalling, and for a while nothing could get through it. There was an out-throwing of mustard gas and some sharp machine-gun firing before the villages could be cleared and the attack go forward again. But even these things did not check the steady movement of the whole. It was a great victory for a new army, with new staffs and in a new country.



Map of St. Mihiel Salient.

That the Boche was meeting with better men, we knew; that the new machine was going to work better than the old, we did not know. We were mighty glad to know it."

The Franco-American troops which attacked on the western side of the salient had to fight their way across the wooded heights of the Meuse. A division which attacked north of St. Mihiel managed to turn heights of 1,200 feet in the face of the enemy, and capture 2,500 prisoneis, nearly all of whom were Austrians.

By 4.30 the Germans were everywhere in retreat; they

broke into small detachments, and by crossing the hills large numbers of them escaped. Nevertheless the bag of prisoners was very heavy. At the end of the day the Americans had captured 15,000 men and over two hundred guns. Their patrols entered Vigneulles at midnight, and early next morning the town was occupied. By 8 a.m. on the 13th the salient had been wiped out, and the Americans had won a rapid and complete victory.

The dotted line on the map shows the defensive position to which the Germans retired. Should this line be carried Metz would be threatened, and the sheaf of railways to which I have referred would be endangered. If the town of Conflans, only nine miles from the American positions, could be seized, Metz would be cut off, and the armies of the Crown Prince and von Gallwitz would have to fall back on both sides of the Meuse to save their communications with Germany. This would mean the abandonment of the rich mining region of Briey, upon which the Germans mainly relied for the raw material of their munitions. Such a loss would be a very severe blow indeed.

On 13th September the Germans made light of the American success. They said that they had long been considering the giving up of the St. Mihiel salient. If so, it was strange that they had held on to it after their failures before Verdun in 1916, when it had lost all its value to them. As it was, they gave it up under the severe pressure of the American attacks, and lost 15,000 prisoners in the process. They had all along belittled the American effort. They had told their people that their U-boats would prevent the United States from sending soldiers to Europe in any considerable numbers; that such Americans as crossed the Atlantic would be raw soldiers of no particular value; and finally, that such a hastily recruited army could not possess a staff capable of carrying through an offensive successfully. Every one of these prophecies was proved to be utterly false by the Battle of St. Mihiel.

As far back as April 1918, when the Americans fought so gallantly at Vaux, near Château-Thierry, German soldiers knew that the U-boats had failed, and that the Americans were doughty foes. They still, however, believed that the staff work of the new army would prove faulty, and that when the Americans undertook a big job they would make a mess of it. French

French and Americans on the Western Front.
Types of the soldiers who flattened out St. Mihiel Salient.

officers who saw the battle said that the American infantry, artillery, Tanks, and aircraft worked together splendidly, and that the American staff managed the whole affair as though it had been engaged in planning offensives for years past.

On the 14th and 15th the attack was continued, and by the close of the 15th the Americans had reached the line shown on the map, and were exchanging shots with the outlying forts of Metz, not more than six and a quarter miles away.

Not only had the Americans captured from 15,000 to 20,000 prisoners, more than 200 guns, and a great store of material, but by flattening out the salient they had restored direct railway communication along the Meuse valley, and had given back to France 150 square miles of territory. Thousands of French villagers who had lived for four years under the yoke of the Hun were restored to freedom. But, best of all, the young American soldiers had proved themselves more than a match for the Germans. They had won a victory in their first great battle, and were keen to follow it up with further successes. At this time Americans were fighting not only in France but on the Italian frontier and in distant Vladivostok, where their commander, General Graves, had landed on September 14th. Up to August 31st the United States had sent abroad, to all fronts, more than 1,600,000 men, and the number was increasing every day.

* * * * * * *

Among the first visitors to St. Mihiel after it fell once more into French hands were President and Madame Poincaré, who had a home in a neighbouring village. They talked with the people, who told them the Germans had pillaged their homes, had stolen their money, and had fined the town one million francs, but had not treated them with the usual cruelties. Nevertheless they were unfeignedly glad to be able to display their national colours once more, and be quit for ever of German rule.

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In the following chapters I shall give you an account of my visit to the Front on October 17th. In the course of my descriptions of what I then saw, I shall bring the story of the fighting down to October 23rd.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE AUTHOR'S VISIT TO THE FRONT.—I.

"MY eyes make pictures when they are shut," says one of our best-known poets. So it is with the writer of these lines. On 17th October, at the invitation of the British Government, he visited the Western front, and from the moment he landed in France until he again passed through the county of Kent, in all its autumnal beauty and calm, his eyes saw pictures that will never fade from his mind while life endures. He has only to close his eyes to see them again—one long cinema film of ever-moving vehicles, marching columns, ruined

cities, scarred and riven fields, deserted trenches, troops going into action amidst the roar of guns and the crash of bursting shells, Red Cross cars with their freights of wounded, little cemeteries with their serried rows of crosses, prisoners of war hungry and downcast, and liberated villagers rejoicing that the long nightmare of suffering is over, and that they have passed from the grip of tyranny into the blessedness of freedom once more.

The little party of which the writer was one reached the

Kentish port from which the voyage to France was to be made between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Several Channel steamers, all painted with broad belts of black and white and green, so as to make their outlines difficult to see through the periscope of a submarine, lay at the quays, crowded with soldiers returning from leave. We watched our men, laden with their heavy equipment, going on board the vessels and immediately donning life-belts. Two days previously, as

the result of the great attack by the Belgians and the Second British Army under the command of the hero king, Albert, the Germans had abandoned the Flemish coast, and had lost for ever Zeebrugge and Ostend, which they had turned into hornets' nests. Though submarines no longer issued from these ports, the U-boats were still at large, and every precaution had to be taken. Each person on board was furnished with a life-belt, and was instructed how to don it.

Over a calm sea in the late afternoon we sailed out of the

harbour in convoy. Away to port and starboard grim, black destroyers, like serpents of the ocean, darted to and fro, their lookouts scanning the surface for signs of under-water craft. In front, a destroyer led the way through the mine-field which blocks the Strait of Dover. From time to time she flashed light signals to the vessels of the convoy, and in reply they made sharp turns along the winding fairway. The presence of these vigilant guardians gave everybody on board a sense of security. The strong arm of the Navy was encircling us, and though we were threading a sea-lane where death and destruction might raise their heads at any moment, or neglect to follow the course prescribed might bring us into contact with hidden explosives, our confidence in the watchfulness and skill of our seamen was unbounded. As we proceeded, a seaplane whirred over our heads, its occupants peering down into the waters, and its bombs ready for release.

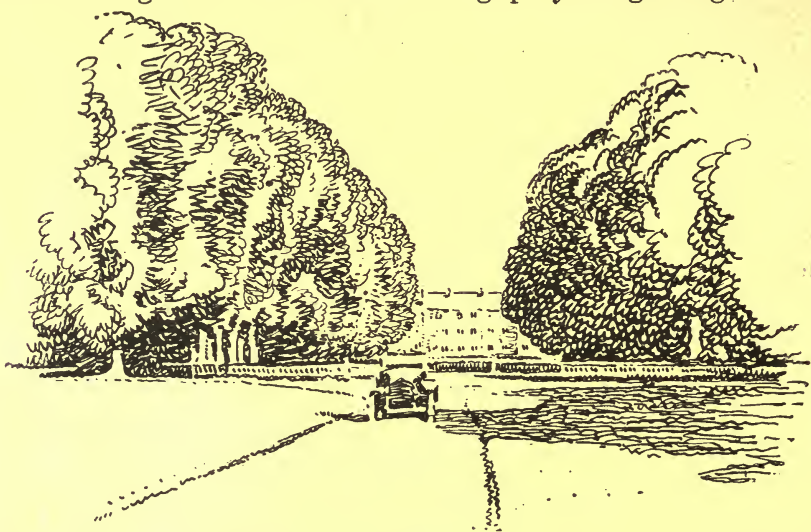
The decks of our vessel were crowded with officers and men, most of them young in years but old in war. They were returning with the knowledge that all was going well and that victory was now certain; but nowhere was there the slightest sign of elation. They were just as calm and unruffled as during those March days when we fell back before the great German onset and disaster seemed to be our portion. One who did not understand the British character might have supposed them indifferent. One who knew them well would say, "Here is an unconquerable race that, like the Stoics of old, can bear 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' without dismay, and can welcome victory without losing its head or its dignity."

Amidst the soldiers were many nurses, V.A.D.'s, and W.A.A.C.'s, all of them inspired by the same spirit, all playing their part in the business of war with the same courage and devotion. Some of these noble women were returning to hospitals and centres where any night the bombs of enemy aeroplanes might tear them limb from limb. To look at them as they chattered with their friends or beguiled the time with a book, you would imagine that they were going home for the evening after a day in the office or shop.

"Unhasting, unresting," the vessels of the convoy steamed onward without incident, and darkness had shrouded the scene by the time the French harbour was reached. The business of disembarkation was long and tedious. Every person who

came ashore had to undergo the close scrutiny of the authorities. We, as guests of the British Government, were specially favoured, and were permitted to take our departure without undue delay. A staff officer was waiting to receive us, and to pilot us to the car which was to carry us to our headquarters. We traversed the darkened streets of the town, and ran out into the country under the light of a full moon. In an hour and a half we were driving up the long avenue of the French château set apart for British visitors to the front. Half an hour later dinner was announced.

The château was of the usual type of French country house, with stabling and outhouses forming projecting wings to its



front, and a farmyard in the rear. It stood in an extensive park, and from the steps at the entrance one looked down a long stretch of grass bounded on either side and at the end by fine trees, now glowing in their autumn tints. Within, all was palatial. Huge maps of every part of the front were displayed, and our line at the moment was clearly indicated. One room was filled with war souvenirs from the German trenches—rifles, machine guns, gas alarms, helmets, shell cases, and a thousand and one other instruments of war, including a figure illustrating in the most realistic fashion a German stormer wearing an iron breastplate, and holding up his hands with the cry, " Kamerad ! "

But what gave the château a special interest to British visitors was the fact that close at hand lay a battlefield renowned in English history.

> " Upon St. Crispin's day
> Fought was this noble fray,
> Which fame did not delay
> To England to carry.
> Oh! when shall Englishmen
> With such acts fill a pen,
> Or England breed again
> Such a King Harry?"

Englishmen, Scotsmen, Welshmen, Irishmen, and men from the Dominions have filled a pen with even more glorious deeds in our own day and generation.

Next morning, under the guidance of a staff officer, we boarded our car early, and hastened towards the battle-front. That we were actually to enter the fighting zone was apparent from the steel helmet which was handed to each of us, and the gas mask which we were instructed how to wear should necessity arise.

We first made our way towards the headquarters of the army into whose sphere we were to penetrate. We travelled for many miles along one of the broad, straight national roads of France, and before long were struck by the fact that North France had become British. On every road there were British direction boards with British warnings: " Keep to the right;" " Slow down;" " Sharp corner." Every few hundred yards we saw groups of British road-menders; at every turning there was a British director of traffic; and in every village we saw the familiar khaki of British soldiers, who were going about their business as though born and bred in the country. At the entrance to every village we saw painted up in large letters, " This is ——." By the roadside were the great storage " dumps " of material, and from them to the

supply stations nearer the front ran almost unending lines of motor lorries—great black-hooded vehicles marked with the broad arrow and filled with food, ammunition, and countless other necessities of war. From the time we entered France to the hour when we left it we were never out of sight of these motor lorries, either pressing forward heavily laden, or returning to their bases for fresh supplies.

As we watched the very heavy traffic we realized the enormous importance of keeping the highways in a good state of repair. Tens of thousands of men—British, French, Italians, Zulus, Basutos, Chinamen, and others—are employed on this work; and though they know nothing of the "pomp and circumstance of war," they are as essential to victory as their comrades in the firing-line. The pick and shovel of the road-mender play their part in winning the war as surely as the rifle and machine gun of the fighting soldier. Were the roads to become impassable, the men who are facing the enemy would be unable to continue the struggle. They would lack food and supplies; reinforcements would reach them slowly and with difficulty; they could make no headway, no matter how heroic they might be.

When the enemy is in retreat, the speed of the pursuit largely depends upon the industry and skill of these road-menders. You see them flinging shovelfuls of stones into the hollows under the very bodies of the passing vehicles. Later on, in the war zone, we saw them working with feverish haste on roads which the retreating Germans had mined. As soon as a gaping chasm was reached, they constructed by-paths in the fields on either side, so that the traffic should not be delayed, while other gangs filled up the holes with remarkable rapidity. On one of the roads across which the enemy had passed only six or seven hours before, our car made its way without interruption by means of side tracks; on the return journey, a few hours later, the holes were completely filled up, and we ran along the broad highway without noticing the gaps which had turned us aside earlier in the day. If after the war a man tells you that he was engaged in road-mending in France, do not regard him as a "carpet soldier." He is anything but that; he has done his share in securing victory, and that frequently under heavy shell-fire. Thousands of road-menders have made the great sacrifice.

In due course we reached the headquarters of the First Army, and on the wall of a barn opposite to the sentinelled entrance we saw a large map of the front with the British line, as it was at the moment, clearly marked by a red cord. While we were examining it, the officer in charge of our party was able to tell us that at two o'clock that morning Lille had been abandoned by the enemy. "Gentlemen," he said, "we will hurry towards Lille, and I may be able to get you there before our troops enter." We felt that we were in luck's way, and our expectations ran high.

Lille, you will remember, is by far the most important industrial town of North France. Before the war it was famous for its great textile factories, in which linens, cottons, velvets, ribbons, and woollen goods were produced in great number and variety. There were also sugar, soap, and tobacco factories, dye and chemical works, and distilleries. In the outskirts were large bleachfields. The population exceeded 215,000.

The first mighty sweep of the Germans into France drove the Allies into a long and hasty retreat which did not end until the Allies were south of the Marne. During this retreat no attempt was made to hold Lille. Though it was set down in the reference books as a great entrenched camp, the forts had been dismantled, and the earthworks had long been overgrown with grass and weeds. The enemy took possession of this rich prize without firing a shot. From the end of August 1914 up to this very day, October 18, 1918, the German flag had waved above the city, and its inhabitants had been in thrall to a foreign invader. Now the Germans had gone for ever, and we were soon to witness the transports of delight with which the populace greeted their deliverance.

Our immediate objective was Béthune, on the La Bassée Canal. Not a moment was wasted in getting under way. We ran southward towards the canal through mining country, with here and there great shapely mounds of refuse topped by the latticed headgear of coal pits. At Lillers we first saw the effects of the enemy shell-fire. During his "great push" in the spring of the year 1918 he had pierced the Portuguese line between the Lys and the canal, and had thrust a deep and ever-narrowing salient into the country between the two waterways. This enabled him to shell towns and villages far behind his former line, and from Lillers onward we were never for

five minutes out of sight of the wreckage produced by his big guns. We passed by whole rows of houses, roofless and holed beyond recovery; and so frequent was the sight of ruined homes that, before we reached Béthune, a house unshelled was a novelty.

During our long struggles to the north and south of the canal, Béthune was the resort of thousands of our men during

their brief hours of relief. There were good shops in the town, many bright little tea-rooms and estaminets; and in its streets our men tasted something of civilized life, which was all the sweeter because of its contrast with the long-drawn-out agony of trench fighting. Now we discovered that the whole centre of the town was a wilderness of desolation. A few inhabitants remained; some of those who had abandoned the place when the shelling was at its height were returning, and

we saw them poking about amongst the ruins of their houses in the hope of recovering articles of value.

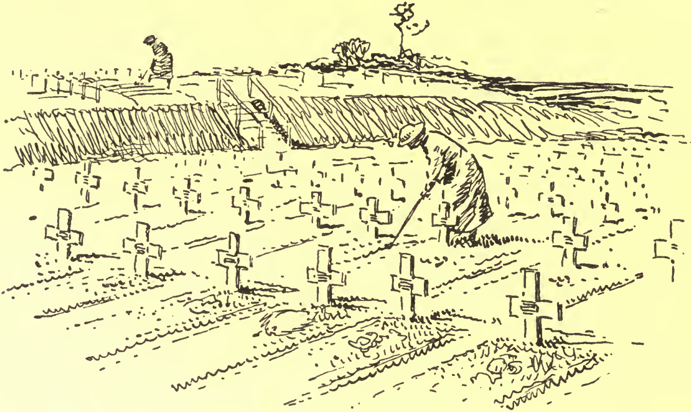
Try to imagine what your own town would look like after a terrible earthquake, and you will have some idea of the appearance of Béthune to-day. We climbed over huge mounds of bricks and mortar, wooden beams and ironwork, all mixed together in the most awful confusion. A portion of the church tower was still standing, and here and there a few walls, with the paper hanging from them like trailing weeds, lifted themselves above the tumbled heaps of *débris*. A road had been cleared, and on either side of it bricks and stones were piled up yards high. One saw shops with their roofs caved in or sagging, ready to fall, and every article in them either smashed to atoms or flung about in the most ghastly confusion. Hard by was a fine residence, now as completely ruined as one of our ancient abbeys. And yet, so remarkable is the caprice of the shell that in one of the lower rooms a glass gasalier remained untouched. All the damage which we saw had been done by German guns since March last.

We left Béthune with a great pity for the inhabitants, many of whom had lost their all, and a deep resentment against those who had so wickedly and wantonly destroyed the place. Our guide smiled as we waxed hot with indignation. "This is nothing," he said. "Wait till you see La Bassée and Lens. You are only on the fringe of the devastated region. Every town and village over a broad belt of country between the North Sea and the Vosges has either been wiped off the face of the earth or reduced to a worse condition than this. What a bill the Hun will have to foot when he comes along with a white flag!"

We pushed on, and following a road skirting the south

bank of the canal for a few miles, reached Cuinchy,* a village which has figured much in the history of the war. There is now no Cuinchy. A few pitiful wrecks of houses remain; and on the crumbling walls some wag has written "Harley Street," probably because at one time or another, in the cellars of these houses, the doctors were busy attending to the wounded. We crossed the canal to the north bank by a bridge on which the engineers were at work, and as we did so saw a line of sunken barges, hopelessly shattered by gun-fire.

Our car pulled up, and we made our way on foot to what was once Givenchy. Near at hand we saw one of the very many cemeteries which sanctify the battlefields for four hundred long miles. We gazed upon rank after rank of wooden crosses,



beneath which lie the mortal remains of those who freely gave their young and vigorous lives to save their country, and indeed the whole world, from a slavery worse than death. These cemeteries, which after the war will be the Gethsemane of many anguished hearts, are lovingly tended; they will remain for ever sacred to our gallant dead.

We now trod a battlefield on which our men were facing the enemy only sixteen days ago. Up to 2nd October the Germans lay in yonder trenches; but on that day they began a withdrawal which did not slow down until they were to the east of Lille. Why had they gone? For the simple reason that if they had remained any longer they would have been trapped. Farther south, between Cambrai and St.

* See map, p. 52, Vol. IV.

Quentin, Sir Douglas Haig had been pushing forward daily ever since he began his counter-offensive, and now lay east of the old battle-grounds. This movement of itself would not, however, have forced the Germans to withdraw between the La Bassée Canal and Armentières. Some important advance to the north was needed in addition. While the tremendous battle for the Hindenburg Line* was in progress, Marshal Foch instructed King Albert to strike in Flanders with his Belgians and Plumer's Second British Army. Wonderful success favoured this onset, and the whole Allied world rejoiced that the Belgians, after their long martyrdom on the Yser, were so full of pluck and spirit that they could still accomplish great things. They rushed through the enemy's positions with wonderful speed, and meanwhile the British south of the Ypres salient carried everything before them. The map which we examined at headquarters showed them far beyond the dreary swamps in which we had so long and so heroically struggled from October 1914 until those critical days in the spring of 1918 when we were pushed back to the Kemmel Hills. We and the Belgians had swept across positions which it took our troops three months to conquer last year, and had carried our front to the outskirts of Bruges, and thence to Courtrai, on the Lys river.

These great advances, combined with the steady forward movement of Sir Douglas Haig further south, had enclosed La Bassée and Lille in a bag the mouth of which was being drawn closer and closer every day. The enemy knew that he could no longer delay his departure from this region unless he was prepared to suffer a Sedan. So on 2nd October he began to draw back, and our men followed him up closely. They were now on the heels of the Hun.

The battlefields around Givenchy almost baffle description. The whole ground for miles is honeycombed with trenches: some just as our men left them; others, shapeless ditches, deep in mud, with the parapets grass grown. We walked forward along a little tram line, stepping every now and then over the telephone wires which still lay across the fields, and climbed a mound of rubbish, some ten feet high, on which a flag was fluttering. It was the site of Givenchy church. From this little eminence we gazed upon a

* See Chapter XIV.

maze of trenches far more intricate than the maze at Hampton Court. Where there were no trenches the ground was pitted and pock-marked with shell-holes, and everywhere we saw the rusty strands of barbed wire above the grass and weeds. The direction boards still stood; empty dug-outs showed signs of recent habitation; water tanks, dynamos for electric light, pumps for draining the trenches, boxes of grenades, clips of cartridges—all the things which men leave behind when they hurry forward —were to be seen at every step. It was clear that even in these dreary holes, deep in mud and every moment in danger of shell bursts and snipers' bullets, our men had retained their sense of humour. A dismal ditch, that would have daunted the soul of a Mark Tapley, was labelled "Happy Valley," and a foul and noisome den beneath the sodden earth bore the sign "Hotel Cecil."

From the mound that once was Givenchy church we looked far and wide over the region where less than three weeks ago the battle was raging. A glance at the map showed us the whole plain dotted with villages. Now it was as if some Titan had passed a huge scraper across the land. For miles not a house was visible; the whole district was as bare as a prairie. Away in front, to the north-east, we saw a slight lift of land—the famous Aubers Ridge, the only natural obstacle between us and Lille. It needed no great effort of the imagination to picture our men gazing through their periscopes at this slope —so near and yet so far—and longing for the day when they would top the rise and look down upon the great city which for four long years had eluded their grasp. Away a mile or so to the left lay Festubert,* the scene of so much unavailing sacrifice, and, three or four miles further on, Neuve Chapelle,† which we

* See Chapter XXXI., Vol. IV.
† See Chapters XVIII., XIX., Vol. IV.

carried at tremendous cost in March 1915, only to be foiled within sight of our goal. We also made an attack on the ridge during the Battle of Loos, but again we failed.

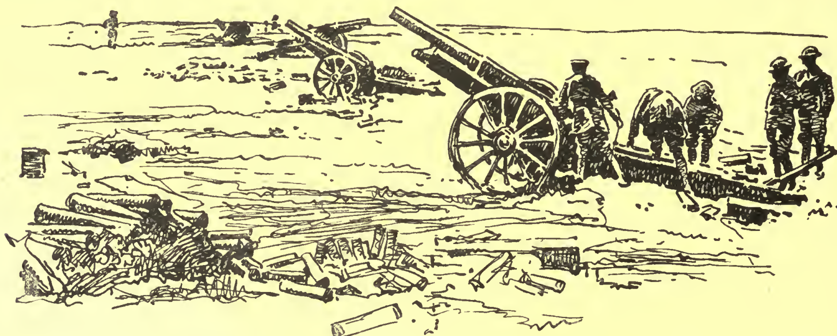
We left Givenchy, beyond which our troops had made no advance from October 19, 1914, up to sixteen days ago, recrossed the canal, and, turning sharply to the north-east, sped along the highway to La Bassée. All the ground on our left was the scene of furious struggle during the year 1915. The tragic "Brickfields" reminded us of the battle in January of that year, when the Guards fought to the death behind stacks, kilns, and a "keep" of bricks. Further on we skirted the "Railway Triangle," and recalled the heroism of Lance-Corporal O'Leary. The ground was still criss-crossed with trenches, and the railway lines, on which stood rows of riddled trucks, showed great gaps where the bridges had been blown up. A more depressing sight could scarcely be imagined.

As we neared the village of Auchy we could make out to the south the slag heap known as Fosse 8, the scene of terrible fighting during 1915. Beyond it lay the famous Hohenzollern Redoubt, where the ground is literally sodden with the blood of some of the most gallant men who ever fought for Britain. A run of three miles brought us into La Bassée, now for the first time in British hands. No words can picture the scene. The destruction almost passes belief: there is not a whole house standing in the place; the town will have to be rebuilt from its foundations. The guns of friend and foe have played remorselessly upon it, and—it is no more.

A mile or two to the east of La Bassée we sped over a broad highway along which the Germans had tramped less than forty-eight hours previously. At every turning and at every level crossing we saw direction boards with German lettering. Notices to troops and civilians, also in German, were posted up on blank walls, and we felt for the moment as though we had suddenly been transported to the Fatherland. Much of the road was camouflaged against the prying eyes of our airmen, and on the left side we saw German trenches only recently vacated. Heaps of undischarged shells marked the gun positions; captured guns, not yet removed, stood solitary with their muzzles pointing upwards; boxes of grenades, broken rifles, odds and ends of equipment, even torn postcards and letters, lay about in confusion—all the litter of places where men

have huddled together, and from which they have made a hurried departure.

Beyond La Bassée the signs of shelling decreased considerably, but the enemy had done his best to delay our pursuit. Every telegraph post had been neatly sawn through at the base. At intervals the tall trees that fringe the roads on either side had been felled, to prevent us from using the branches as supports for our field telegraphs. Every mile or so the road had been blown up, and our car rocked and swayed as it turned aside to avoid the craters. Despite all the enemy's efforts, our troops had gone forward without pause. Our car ran by company after company of infantry, laden like camels, and trudging stolidly along in the middle of the road; past batteries of guns tugged forward by clanking "caterpillars;" ammunition



columns, some with Indian drivers, and squadrons of cavalry, each man with a net of hay at the pommel of the saddle. On one side of the road the great motor lorries flowed towards the front; on the other side the "empties" ebbed towards the base. The road grew more and more congested as we proceeded.

At length we reached the La Haute Deule Canal, and our progress was stayed. On the other side lay Habourdin, the suburb of Lille, continuous with Loos,* which leads to the fortifications of the city. Every bridge along the canal had been blown up, and our engineers were busy erecting new crossing-places for artillery and other heavy traffic. By the roadside we saw guns carefully camouflaged with patches of colour and garlands of leaves. Already a pontoon bridge had

* Not to be confused with the Loos to the north-west of Lens.

been thrown across the water, and when we crossed it we found ourselves in a place which the enemy had only abandoned at two that morning.

In the night the townsfolk, closely confined to their houses, heard the rumble of moving vehicles, the clank of harness, and the heavy footfall of German jack-boots. When they peeped out of their windows in the morning they discovered, to their great joy, that the hated foe, who had ruled them with a rod of iron for four long and bitter years, had gone never to return. Then like magic bright new flags—kept in secret hiding until this glad day—waved from every window. Mothers braided the hair of their little ones with tricolour ribbons; neighbours fell on each other's necks and sobbed for joy. Once more they were free; once more France was their mother!

Though the Hun had not taken his leave more than twelve hours when we entered the place, the printing presses had been busy, and in almost every window we saw placards in French and English: "Glory be to our Deliverers." Women and children in little knots at the doorsteps showered thanks and blessings upon us as representatives of Britain. The pious had already attended church to offer thanksgivings for their release from captivity.

When our troops appeared the people became almost delirious with delight. They pressed little flags and bunches of flowers upon our men. The girls, from doorstep and window, flung kisses, which the weary but cheerful "Liverpools" and "Manchesters" were not slow to return as they trudged by. They had marched far that day; but there were good billets awaiting them a mile or two further on, and the field kitchens following close behind them, and leaving in their wake appetizing odours, promised a hot meal without delay.

Hardly had we entered Loos when we were met by a manufacturer of sewing cotton whose mill had stood empty and silent for four years. He and some five or six hundred men of substance in and around Lille had been carried off to Russia as hostages, and had there suffered great hardships. For some reason our friend had been permitted to return, and was now almost beside himself with joy at the liberation of his town. He led us to the broad, deep ditch beyond which women and children of Lille thronged the gateway of the fortifications. The road across the ditch had been mined, and sentries armed

with rifle, bayonet, and revolver firmly but courteously barred our way. No troops or civilians were to enter Lille itself until our "tunnellers" had examined it and pronounced it free of "booby traps."

Very reluctantly we retraced our steps, and as we did so two aeroplanes made joyous dives and twists and loops above our heads. "Ah," said our French friend, "perhaps that is my aviator son come to greet me after four long years." We hoped it might be so, but feared that the wish was father to the thought. When, however, we were seated in his house enjoying his hospitality, a maid suddenly entered and said, "The young master has descended!" At once we hurried out into the street; and there, sure enough, was the son, a very gallant young Frenchman, wearing some of the most coveted decorations, walking towards us in the midst of a cheering crowd, side by side with the beaming curé. The meeting of the long-parted pair was most touching.

Habourdin, Loos, and Lille were almost uninjured. Rumour said that the French had sworn to wreck a German town if Lille were destroyed. Much machinery and materials for munitions had been carted away, and the famous art treasures of the city had been removed—for safety, so the Germans said. The inhabitants bitterly complained of the harsh treatment to which they had been subjected. All the men of military age had been deported, and women and girls had been carried off to work as field labourers for the invader. Now that the Hun was on the run, wives and sisters and sweethearts were filled with the trembling hope that their men folk might return any day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE AUTHOR'S VISIT TO THE FRONT.—II.

EARLY next morning we left our headquarters *en route* for Lens. There was little new to attract our attention until we saw a direction post: "To Mont St. Eloy." At once we realized that we were on the verge of that district in which the French made such heroic struggles during May

and the early days of June 1915. A few miles to the east lay Neuville St. Vaast, and to the immediate south of it that wonderful network of trenches and redoubts, tunnels, and roofed-in pits which the French called the Labyrinth. German labour and ingenuity had been lavished upon it; the enemy deemed it impregnable; but the French, fighting with desperate courage

in the dark underground passages, carried it completely, though not without terrible losses.* The whole district is one great burial ground of friend and foe.

Instead of pushing on to Mont St. Eloy we turned northward, and soon reached the site of Carency, where we alighted to examine the valley leading up past Souchez to the outskirts of Lens. Scarcely anywhere in France have such fierce and costly battles been fought. To the north lay the high, sombre ridge of Notre Dame de Lorette, marking off the coal region from the chalk on which we stood. Across the valley at the foot of the ridge lay the gaunt ruin of the church of Ablain St. Nazaire. All was peaceful, and, save for the truck-loads of British soldiers on the railway, there was no sign of war. It was hard to realize that three weeks ago our guns were thundering in this valley.

Across the fields to the right and left we could see the white scars of old trenches, but of the villages marked on the map nothing remained. A nearer view showed us mile after mile of zigzagging ditches and wide stretches of rusty barbed wire. Away to the south-east were those "White Works" which General (now Marshal) Foch blew into fragments on that roaring Sunday of May 1915 when Neuville St. Vaast was captured. It was no wonder that Carency had disappeared. Before its site was in French hands more than twenty thousand shells had been hurled upon it.

We walked on to Souchez, and turned our eyes towards the Vimy Ridge, which the Canadians so gallantly captured on Easter Monday in the year 1917. We could now realize that, when we gained a foothold on that ridge and stuck to it like grim death, we had won the most commanding position on the whole front. Looking up the valley, we could see Souchez Wood, a mass of splintered and dead trees, some of the standing trunks shining white like ghosts of their former selves. With the aid of field-glasses we could make out the ruins of Liévin, the south-west suburb of Lens.

We boarded our car and pushed on. As we ran through the ruins of the suburbs we saw away on our left the shattered headgear of many pits standing forlornly on their heaps of refuse. To the north lay Loos, the scene of that tragic struggle in October 1915 when we carried the village, and the

* See Chapters XXIX., XXX., Vol. IV.

Highlanders raced up Hill 70 like hares, only to meet streams of lead from the hidden machine guns that mowed them down by the hundred.

We were now in the outskirts of Lens, for which we had battled since the summer of 1915. Prior to the war it was simply a crowded mining town consisting of thousands of small brick houses. Around it were the little suburbs known as *cités*, the most interesting of them being Cité St. Pierre, the Port Sunlight of France. To-day Lens must be described in the past tense: it exists no longer. On a stone slab by the side of the main street we saw written in chalk: "This *was* Lens." As we passed between the chaotic heaps of rubble we had the feeling that somewhat thus the world's cities might appear on the last day. Lens has been hopelessly shattered by the guns of friend and foe. For weeks before we entered it the Germans had filled it with gas, and our gun-fire was so incessant that they could not remove their dead. There are cellars in Lens filled with corpses, and sealed up until the crack of doom. The air is foul with the reek of decay, and the heart sinks at the sight of the awful devastation. Some day a fair, new, and well-planned Lens will arise; but no money which we can extract from the enemy can ever compensate for the heart-breaks of those whose little homes and cherished possessions have gone for ever.

Onwards we went towards Douai, from which the Germans had only retired on the previous day. They were forced out of it for the same reason that they had left Lille. The rapid advance of Belgian and British troops in Flanders had enabled Plumer to cross the Lys on the 15th and begin an enveloping movement towards the Scheldt. At the same time, Horne's troops south of Arras were pushing forward so far and so rapidly

that Douai now lay at the apex of a dangerous salient. To hold Douai any longer would be to sacrifice its garrison for no military purpose.

The road to Douai was as busy as Piccadilly. The long lines of motor lorries passed and repassed; motor buses from the London streets, packed within and without with men for the firing line, jolted steadily forward, while the trudging columns of "foot-sloggers" cast many an envious glance at their favoured companions. High above us were two "sausages," towed along by steel wires attached to motor vehicles, and attended by scores of airmen. So, slowly but steadily, we advanced over the recently mended road, and in due course reached the suburbs of Douai.

We had not proceeded far before we were held up by the canal. Every bridge was down; but by means of planks thrown across the wreck of a swing-bridge we were able to enter the city proper. Engineers were at work; but so far the only British in the place were the "tunnellers" detailed to seek out and destroy cunningly-laid mines which an incautious touch would explode. These brave, skilful fellows are distinguished by a red stripe running along each arm. Already they had discovered several dangerous traps, and no doubt would find many more before our troops were permitted to enter. On some of the houses they had written in chalk the cautious words, "Considered safe."

We found the ancient historic place as silent as a city of the dead. In the whole of the town there was not a single living inhabitant. A week or more ago the people were driven out, with no more of their household goods than they could carry on their backs, in wheelbarrows, or in perambulators. All the doors stood ajar. The plate glass of many shops was shattered to fragments, and the interiors were as bare as empty nut shells.

We entered one of the better-class houses: it was the home of the Member of Parliament for Douai. As we passed from room to room we stood aghast at the sight. We saw mirrors smashed, chairs, sofas, and musical instruments wrecked, the family portraits destroyed, fine furniture flung into the court-yard, beds ripped up, glass and crockery shivered to fragments, valuable books torn in pieces, private letters lying in heaps. Every article of value had been carried off, and even the

children's toys had been smashed under foot. An outhouse was heaped high with empty bottles from the wine cellar. Remember, this house had been occupied not by ignorant *soldaten*, but by officers and gentlemen—save the mark! The writer has in his possession the printed notice pasted on the doors of the house to indicate that officers were quartered in it.

Every single shop and house in Douai had suffered in a similar way. It would seem as if, after the looting was over, some maniac armed with a hammer had run amok, and had smashed right and left out of sheer lust for destruction. In the middle of one street we saw a mutilated doll and a legless wooden horse.

As we halted in front of the Hôtel de Ville we heard the tinkle of a piano within. Entering, we found several tunnellers, officers and men, resting from their labours. The rooms were in a terrible state of confusion; but a grand piano, by some oversight, had been spared. "Do you perform, sir?" asked one of the officers. The writer confessed that he strummed a little, and was invited to "play 'God save the King' before the Frenchies came in." He did so, while officers and men stood at attention, and followed it up with the Marseillaise.

By this time several journalists had entered the town, amongst them Mr. R. W. Service, the Canadian writer. In their company we made further explorations. Around the Grand Place some of the finest of the town buildings had been mercilessly shelled. The streets had been blotted out by heaps of fallen stone, and here and there fires were smouldering. The pedestal of a fine monument lay prone and splintered; the bronze statue that surmounted it had been wrenched off and carried away, to be melted down for munitions. The great Church of St. Pierre had been hit on the roof, and a portion

lay open to the sky. Near the entrance the vestments of the priests and the flags of old renown had been trampled under foot. The pipes of the organ had been wrenched from their places, battered flat, and piled up ready for removal. So far, only one prisoner had been taken. He was a deserter, who had hidden himself in a cellar and had seized the first opportunity of surrendering.

We learned that our troops were fighting some four miles east of the town, but every attempt to cross the canal and push on towards them failed. We could hear the boom of the guns, and we were eager to see the fighting; but as our car could not proceed, we were doomed to disappointment. After a brief council of war we decided to make our way to Arras, next to Ypres the best known and most fiercely assailed city on the British front.

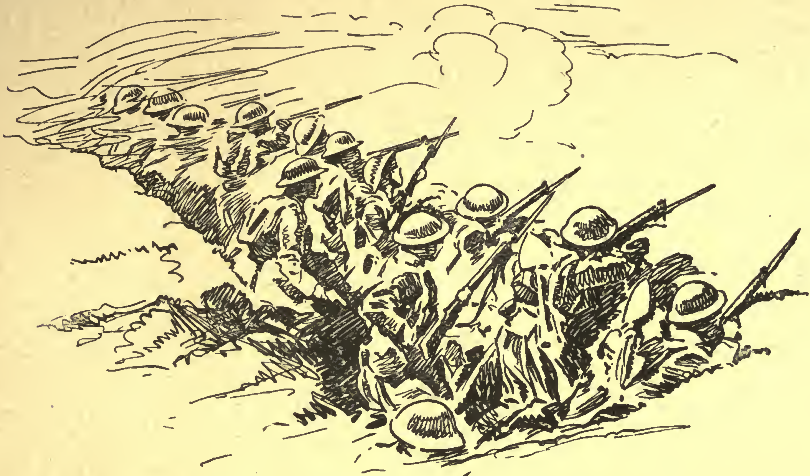
When von Kluck was sweeping southward, driving the Allies before him, in August 1914, Arras was only defended by a corps of French Territorials reinforced by a British detachment. Our men put up a stubborn rearguard fight while the French got away. Then the survivors followed them, and the enemy took possession of the old city and held it until the middle of September. When the Germans were forced to retreat to the Aisne, they had to give up Arras, and the French promptly reoccupied it. In the course of the "race to the sea" Maud'huy clung to it in spite of a terrible bombardment and a succession of fierce attacks. On one occasion the enemy reached the ramparts of the citadel in the south-west quarter of the city, but could go no further. From that day to this Arras has remained in our hands. When the great German offensive began on March 21, 1918, our line crossed the Scarpe in front of Rœux, four miles to the east of the city.

Arras and Vimy Ridge formed the pivot on which our retreat swung back like a trap-door on its hinges. So long as the hinges held, our line could not be broken; once they were forced, our armies to the north and south would be separated, and we should suffer a disaster that might spell ruin for our cause. At 5.30 on the morning of 28th March, after one of the fiercest bombardments of the whole war, the enemy advanced from Arleux, Oppy, and Gavrelle, in dense masses that turned the hill slopes gray. By nightfall he had advanced as far as Fampoux, though at an awful cost of human life.

Some of the most stubborn stands in all history were made by our men, who fought to the death against enemy hordes.

Arras, not four miles away, became a No Man's Land; but do what he might, the enemy could not get any nearer. By nightfall on that red day his failure was so patent, and his losses were so terrible, that he abandoned the attempt and massed his forces for a mighty onslaught on Amiens, only to fail there as elsewhere. The ancient war-worn city of Arras, with memories of battle going back to Julius Cæsar and to Attila and his Huns, was still ours.

Our road crossed battlefields on which the tide of war had ebbed and flowed within the last few weeks. For the



most part we ran along by the side of the Scarpe and its fringing pools. At Vitry we struck the famous Switch line, extending from Drocourt on the north to Quéant on the south. No works which we had so far seen could compare with the Switch line in strength and intricacy. Five systems of trenches all linked together lay one behind the other, and between each system were deep belts of barbed wire which seemed impossible to penetrate. As all the world now knows, the Switch line was carried by the 52nd, 57th, and 63rd Divisions, and by the Canadians. With the assistance of Tanks, some of which now lie in ruins on the scene of their triumph, they broke clean through the German defences on 2nd September. Until one has actually seen this terribly formidable

series of works, it is impossible to realize the magnificent valour and doggedness of those who fought their way through it.

Behind the old German line, amidst the litter of the battle-field, we discovered several pieces of canvas, shaped and painted to represent British snipers. No doubt these targets had been used by the Germans for the purpose of training their sharpshooters to discover and pick off our men. Some of the pieces of painted canvas are now in the museum at the château.

The field of battle much resembled those which we had already traversed. We could follow the progress of the Tanks by their broad ridged tracks, and see how they had crushed the wire and opened lanes through its mazes for the infantry. Every bane, it is said, has its antidote ; certainly, the antidote to the terrible bane of barbed wire is the Tank. But for its

invention we might, even now, be striving vainly to penetrate the spiny undergrowth in front of the German trenches.

As we wandered amidst the shell-holes, the crushed and rusty strands of wire, and the destroyed earthworks, we saw cartridges, grenades, " dud " shells, broken rifles, iron helmets, and every kind of equipment lying about unsalved. One of our party picked up a German grenade, but was immediately ordered to replace it. A day or two previously a party of American tourists had been blown to pieces by a bomb which had exploded the moment it was lifted from the ground. For years to come sudden death will lurk on these battlefields.

Before the war, the scarred and riven waste which we were now crossing consisted of highly-cultivated beet fields, dotted here and there with small sugar refineries. Now the fields

resemble a Highland moor: every sign of tillage has been wiped out, and toothlike walls, rising from huddles of bricks and ironwork, alone mark the site of the busy little factories.

From Rœux to Arras we crossed fields on which the fiercest fighting had taken place. At Fampoux we looked down upon a sunken road which presented an amazing sight. Both sides of the road had been honeycombed with tiers of dug-outs tenanted by our men only a few weeks ago. Many of the dug-outs are very deep: we descended into one by fourteen steps, and found it still habitable. It required no great effort of the imagination to picture our brave fellows sheltering in these cramped quarters while the shells were bursting in the road.

We crossed the Scarpe at St. Laurent and ran into Arras, which has long been a city of ruin and can never be wholly restored. The railway station is a gaunt skeleton, and the Grand Place, with its old Spanish arcades, is a scene of fantastic destruction. The cathedral and the bishop's palace are reduced to a few columns and arches, rising above a hill of tumbled refuse. The French have decided to preserve these ruins in perpetual memory of German infamy. Already they are beginning to take on a mellow dignity. The band of a Scots regiment was playing in the Grand Place as we entered.

Before leaving the city we were permitted to inspect a remarkable engineering work which will long remain as a memorial of the final stages of the war. Amidst a group of shattered trees by the side of one of the roads we saw a flight of steps leading underground. We descended, and found ourselves in a narrow tunnel securely timbered, lighted by electricity, and traversed by a tram line. We trudged along the tunnel for a few hundred yards and turned aside into a series of underground chambers, some occupied by dynamos, others serving as living rooms, and containing a piano and baths. When Arras became a No Man's Land, two generals had their headquarters in these chambers. Telephones and telegraphs kept them in constant touch with their troops in all parts of the line. At one turning some home-sick Scot had chalked up, "Change here for Glasgow and Edinburgh."

The tunnel, we learned, had been constructed from cellar to cellar right under the city, and in it the Canadians were assembled, so as to be safe from the continuous shell-fire, when Sir Douglas Haig on 26th August began his advance on

both sides of the Cambrai road. The Germans, who knew nothing of the tunnel, were greatly surprised to discover that, in spite of their heavy bombardment, our troops were able to emerge from the town. On 26th August the famous 51st Division to the north of the river, and the Canadians to the south, made a fine advance. Rœux was reached, and the Monchy plateau fell into our hands.

Next morning we left the château early, in the hope of seeing our troops in action. There was every prospect of doing so, for beyond Cambrai our men were fighting near Le Cateau, which fell into our hands on October 10th. If luck favoured

us, we might be spectators of a battle. With all speed we made for Arras, and, leaving the city at its south-east corner, ran along the road to Cambrai. Once more we crossed the Switch line, and halted for a few minutes at Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, the village which the Canadians reached during their burst-through on 2nd September. At Marquion we crossed the flooded area around the Canal du Nord, and before us stretched the level plain across which Byng made his great Tank advance in November 1917. One glance at the country was sufficient to show that the ground was specially suited for the manœuvres of the monsters. Hundreds of Tanks took part in

the advance, and the wrecks of many of them strew the plain to-day.

Away to the right we caught a glimpse of Mœuvres, where the seven heroes of the H.L.I. made their gallant stand on 17th and 18th September; and, further east, made out the wooded hump of Bourlon Wood, the scene of heroic struggles during the advance and subsequent retreat of last year. Canadians recaptured it on 28th September, and we noticed that already an aerodrome had been erected at its foot. Every yard of the ground on either side of the road showed the marks of that severe struggle which ended in such complete victory that the enemy was forced to abandon Cambrai.

We were now on the outskirts of Cambrai, and the broad Scheldt lay before us. When the Germans left the city they, of course, blew up the bridges over the river; but our engineers had already erected strong crossing-places capable of carrying the heaviest traffic. As we ran into the city we were amused to see a notice board with this inscription: "No Souvenirs in this Town. Keep Out." We were soon to discover that the information thus vouchsafed was very far from accurate.

Cambrai had been badly battered, but by no means so terribly as Béthune and Arras. The cathedral appeared to be only slightly injured, and the statue of Fénelon, its chief monument, had been sandbagged by the Germans for protection. Not far away in a square lay dumps of weapons and equipment left behind by the enemy. There were stacks of rifles, heaps of bayonets, mounds of helmets and knapsacks, scores of machine guns, together with gas alarms and flame-throwers.

We paid Cambrai the scant courtesy of a hurried visit, for we could faintly hear the roar of guns in the distance, and we were eager to get as near the firing line as possible. We ran through the town, and began to traverse the long, straight road to Le Cateau. It was difficult to suppress our excitement. The road was more thronged than any which we had yet seen. In addition to the usual streams of motor lorries and ammunition columns, battalions of fighting men were steadily pushing forward through the rain; Red Cross cars, full of wounded, crawled past us, and in the fields on the right Tanks were slithering forward towards the battle. Large fields of potatoes, carrots, and turnips lay on the left of the road, all carefully tilled by the forced labour of villagers.

At Beauvois, we happened upon a prisoners' cage just at the moment when a fresh batch of captives was being brought in. The cage was merely a large enclosure surrounded by high fences of barbed wire. The prisoners whom we saw were the first instalment of the three thousand or more who were to be gathered in that day.

We hastened to the cage, and the officers in charge courteously gave us every opportunity of inspecting the prisoners. They had come from the village of Solesmes, which early that morning had been so completely barraged by our artillery and machine guns that the garrison had the choice of death or sur-

render. Many of the men were fine, well-set-up fellows; but their clothing was very poor and thin, and most of them were alive with vermin. They were ravenously hungry, and were gnawing carrots and turnips which they had pulled up in a roadside field.

Another batch of prisoners now arrived, and "The more the merrier" was our comment. Every man was required to empty his pockets and place all his possessions on the ground in a little heap before him. He was then searched, and his belongings were carefully examined. Any letters or postcards likely to contain useful information were impounded; the rest

were handed back. Meanwhile medical officers were making their rounds. Groups of "Tommies" stood outside the cage, looking at the captives as though they were new additions to a Zoo. It was impossible not to be sorry for the woe-begone crowd, and one onlooker expressed our feelings exactly when he tossed a prisoner a cigarette with the remark, "Here—you blighter!" A German sergeant showed us with pride his Iron Cross of the First Class, rimmed with silver.

We boarded our car again, and as we ran on towards Caudry we saw drawn up in a roadside field several of the travelling pigeon cotes which accompany our armies. Many times during the war the little feathered friends housed within have carried messages through the death-laden air, and have thus

been the means of sending relief to men in the direst straits. A mile further on the boom of the guns was terribly loud. It was evident that a big battle was in progress some distance ahead. Troops were rolling up without pause, and we watched them as they tramped on steadily towards the firing line. There was no singing, no sign of reckless gaiety, but a strong, stern solemnity on every face, and a confidence in victory that was unmistakable. Our hearts went out to the gallant lads as they swung by in their vigorous manhood towards the field where Death was soon to reap his red harvest. We saw them pass, company after company, with a great pride and a great pity.

Now a battalion of Maoris, fine stalwart men, with faces like old mahogany, came striding by, their bugles blowing and

their drums beating. They turned up a side road and gave way for a battery of field artillery which galloped by, the drivers using their whips as the horses tore up the muddy road.

We were anxious to push on to Le Cateau, and to see, if possible, the battlefield on which Smith-Dorrien's weary men, on August 26, 1914, beat back an enemy that outnumbered them ten to one, and by checking von Kluck's vanguard enabled the little British army to continue its retreat unbroken and undefeated. Prudence, however, forbade. The enemy was bombarding the town, and his shells were bursting on the road leading to it. We therefore turned up a side lane, and in a ploughed field on our left saw a battery of our guns at work.

With our gas masks at the alert, we waded across the wet, muddy ground, and took up our station behind the battery. The young lieutenant in command was a mere boy, but a veteran for all that. He greeted us with a smile, and, producing a map, showed us the wood, some four or five miles away on the Harpies river, which he was shelling. There was a German battery in that wood, and his job was to "knock it out." In a ditch near by, under a bit of canvas, lay his telephonist, and at the other end of the wire a mile or two ahead was his forward observer, watching the shell-bursts and sending back directions. High above us hovered a great "sausage;" but as the day was overcast, the man in the basket, swaying to and fro in the breeze, had no very extended vision.

The roar of our guns was ear-splitting, and seemed to stand out above the incessant growl, like a blot of scarlet on a black background. As we watched, we could see stretcher-bearers and Red Cross cars slowly making their way down to the main road. German shells now came whining through the air, and we watched their bursts to the right and left of us. The staff officer responsible for our safety now insisted that we should return to our car and run back to Cambrai before the enemy's shells made the road impassable.

A glance at the map showed us clearly why the enemy was making a stubborn stand, and was launching counter-attacks to the east of Le Cateau. Behind him was the great forest of Mormal, through which the "Old Contemptibles," with torn feet and aching limbs, dragged themselves wearily during the retreat from Mons. There is only one broad highway running east through the forest, and unless our troops could be held

up sufficiently long for the enemy to get away, disaster would be certain to overtake him in the narrow and winding lanes.

So, while the guns were still roaring, we hastened back to Cambrai in time to see groups of refugees straggling in from the liberated villages. They were all women, children, and old men, and they staggered along under bundles, or struggled with boxes containing such household possessions as they had been able to carry away with them. Our men, always good-natured, and always ready to lend a helping hand to the weak and feeble, were shouldering their burdens, and listening to their stories of hardship and suffering.

Very heartrending many of these stories were. One woman described how she and her friends were forced to work

in the fields, like the Israelites of old, under the eye of cruel taskmasters, and how terribly they were starved and stinted of food. German soldiers were billeted in her house for four years. Every night they got drunk, and behaved " very wickedly." But she added, " That is finished. The Boche has gone, never to return. He knows it is all over with him."

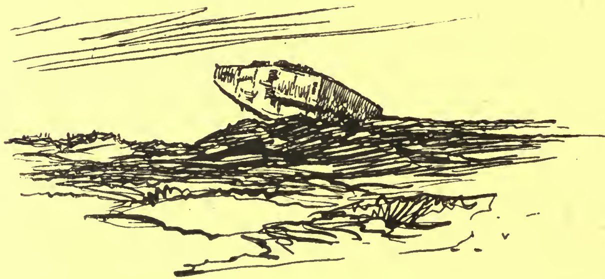
* * * * * * *

So ended a visit which marked an epoch in our lives. We returned with a deep conviction that our men were inspired with the spirit of victory, and that the complete collapse of the enemy could not long be delayed. We had marched with and talked with scores of our gallant fellows—soldiers not by choice but by necessity, men who were ready to dare everything for the honour and welfare of their country and for the

safety of their dear ones at home. But we met no man who loved war for its own sake. Experience of battle, and of all the horror and misery that it entails, had taught them only too well that the one great prize worth fighting for was Peace. All were well aware that the world could never know that blessed boon until the evil spirit that had entered into Germany had been so crushed that it could never again raise its head.

When, in God's good time, our gallant men return and once more resume the old life of field, factory, shop, and mine, there will be no more ardent lovers of peace than those who have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death to win it for us. When the joy bells of victory peal from a thousand steeples, they will be the first to cry with the poet—

> " Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
> Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
> Ring out the thousand wars of old,
> Ring in the thousand years of peace."



CHAPTER XIX.

HOW BULGARIA CAVED IN.

IN the course of the two preceding chapters I have referred to that series of offensives on the Western front which forced the Germans into retreat all along the line and made their final overthrow a matter of a few weeks at the utmost. In later chapters I shall return to the story of these great thrusts, and shall give you some idea of the part played by the French and Americans in securing victory. Important as their work was, Marshal Foch tells us that it was the British hammer-blows which proved decisive.

In this chapter I propose to tell you how one of Germany's co-partners in crime caved in, and thus began that series of surrenders which made the months of October and November periods of great rejoicing in all the Allied countries. It will interest you to note that the beginning of the end of the struggle occurred in the Balkans—that is, in the very region which saw the first clash of arms in the Great War.

I need not tell you all over again the shameful story of Bulgaria's treachery, nor recount the incidents of the earlier fighting. In Chapter IV. of this volume I reviewed the history of the Salonika Army down to the end of August 1918. You will remember that its progress was very disappointing. When General Sarrail was appointed commander-in-chief in October 1915 a French punster said, "*Ça raille,*" which means, "Now we shan't be long." We were, however, very long before we made headway. You know what terrible difficulties had to be encountered in the roadless, mountainous, and unhealthy country. Not until that skilful and enterprising general, Franchet D'Esperey, was appointed to the command, and strong reinforcements took the field, could the Allies go ahead. When they did so they achieved wonderful success, and did

not call a halt until the Bulgarians cried "*Pax!*" and made an unconditional surrender.

The objective at which the Allies were aiming was Uskub. It is a picturesque place, lying at the foot of a valley running between two mountain ranges. From Uskub one can travel north, east, and west, by railway or by good roads, into Old Serbia or Montenegro to the north, into Albania to the west, and into Bulgaria to the east. One excellent road runs eastward to the Bulgarian town of Kustendil, from which there is a railway to Sofia. As a centre of roads and railways Uskub is a most important place; once it was captured, the Allies could make rapid headway in clearing the country.

A glance at the map on page 180 seems to show that the easiest way to reach Uskub from Salonika is to push along the railway which follows the course of the Vardar. This route, however, was impossible, for the Vardar valley is no more than a mere lobby between the hills, and an army traversing it would be at the mercy of an enemy on the heights. The hills which fringe the Vardar valley on the east run east and west, and form part of the great mountain mass of the Balkan range. Clearly nothing could be done on that side. The mountains on the west run north and south, and at the time when my story opens were largely in the hands of the Allies. Only on this western side of the Vardar was it possible to make an advance towards Uskub.

The map to which I have referred shows you the two-hundred-mile Allied front from the Adriatic Sea to the Ægean Sea on September 15, 1918. You see that it ran from the mouth of the Voyusa river to Lake Presba, then passed north of Monastir, crossed the bend of the Cerna, and ran due east past Lake Doiran to the Struma, which it followed in a south-easterly direction to the Ægean Sea. Along the section on the extreme right Greek troops were watching the crossing-places of the Struma and the defiles through the eastern end of the Belashitza Mountains. To the left of the Greeks, General Milne's British army of two weak divisions was holding the Doiran front, and on his left up to the Dobropolje Mountains, which fringe the eastern side of the northward-flowing Cerna, were two other Greek divisions. From the Dobropolje Mountains westward lay a French corps. The two Serbian armies were astride the Cerna, and covered the approaches to Monastir up to the north of Lake

Marshal Mistich, Commander-in-Chief of the Serbian Armies, and General Milne commanding the British Forces.

(Official photograph.)

Presba. These Serbian armies had been increased by the addition of a Yugo-Slav division formed of volunteers from the oppressed provinces of Austria-Hungary. West of Lake Presba the Albanian front was held by two other French divisions, which linked up with the Italians who held the lines along the north of the Voyusa river down to the sea. Facing the Greeks and the British army up to the Vardar was the First Bulgarian Army, and west of that river the Second Bulgarian Army extended the line to Lake Presba. This army included what was known as the Eleventh German Army; it was, however, German only in its officers and N.C.O.'s. The Albanian front was entrusted to the Austrians.

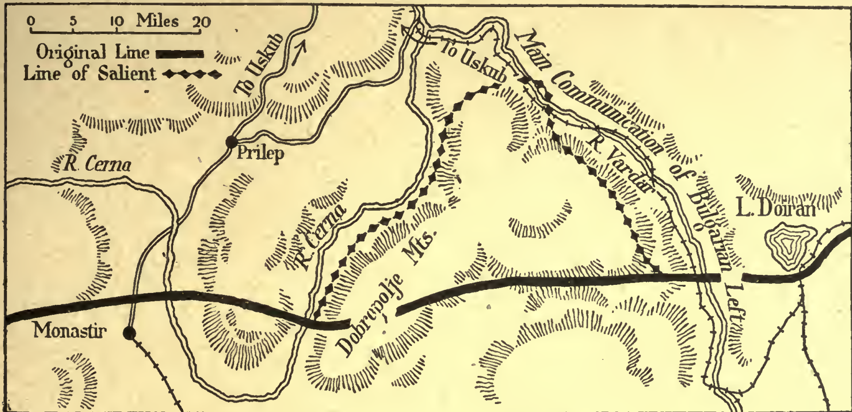
The map on page 181 shows you the all-important sector of

Map showing the Allied Front in the Balkans.

this long line. Fix your attention on the area between the great bend of the Cerna and the gorge of the Vardar along which run the road and railway supplying the Bulgarian left. Across this area runs a range of mountains from five thousand to six thousand feet high, and along its southern slope lay the strong Bulgarian trenches which had been constructed by Austrian and German engineers. On 15th September, after careful preparation, General D'Esperey launched an attack against these trenches from Vetrenik to Sokal, a distance of seven miles. He broke right through the enemy's defences, and next day, striking on a wider front, captured the Kozyak heights. In these two days' fighting over four thousand prisoners, with thirty guns, fell into the hands of the Allies.

Without a pause D'Esperey continued his advance, and by the evening of the 17th had thrust into the enemy's front a wedge so broad and deep that it separated the two Bulgarian armies. The result was that the Second Army, fearing it would be cut off from Uskub, fell back on both banks of the Cerna. Next day the Serbian horsemen rode twenty miles north of their starting-place. On this day the British and Greek troops attacked on the Doiran front, but could not make much headway, and were forced to give up some of their gains.

While the Bulgars were holding the Allied right, the Franco-Serbian armies continued their advance unchecked, and by the evening of the 21st had reached the Vardar at the point shown on the map. The road and railway supplying the Bulgarian



Map to illustrate the Allied Offensive.

left were now cut, as also was the light railway running from Prilep to Gradosko. The junction at Gradosko was defended by German regiments hurriedly thrown into the fight, but they could not resist the Serbian onset. When the Bulgars began to retreat, the Germans fired into the wavering ranks and mowed down their allies without mercy.

Thus in the course of a single week D'Esperey drove into the enemy's lines between the Cerna and the Vardar a great wedge forty miles deep, and completely severed the two Bulgarian armies. Both were forced to retreat, and, what was worse, along roads that at every step separated them more widely from each other. The First Army retired across the Bulgarian border, through Strumnitza and the defiles of the

Belashitza Mountains; while the Second Army, cut off from Uskub, was forced to retreat into Albania, in the hope that it might link up with the Austrians. In both cases the armies broke up into detachments, and before long the retreat was a rout. Before long the Allies had captured 10,000 men and more than three hundred guns. As the Bulgars fell back they burnt the villages and abandoned their stores.

Now that the Bulgarians were on the run, D'Esperey gave them no chance to rally. He followed them up relentlessly all along the line from the Struma to Lake Presba. French cavalry rode into Prilep on the 23rd, and on the same day the British crossed the Bulgarian frontier. On the 26th General Milne was in Strumnitza, and three days later the great objective, Uskub, was reached.

This rapid and complete success of the Allies struck dismay into the Bulgars. They appealed to the Central Powers for reinforcements, but none were forthcoming: both Germany and Austria were too hard pressed to be able to spare them sufficient troops to turn rout into victory. On 25th September General Torodoff sent a letter to General Milne begging an armistice of forty-eight hours, during which Bulgarian delegates might arrange a surrender. Milne sent on the letter to D'Esperey, who refused to suspend the fighting, but declared himself willing to receive the delegates under a flag of truce. They arrived at Salonika on the 28th, and on the 30th signed an agreement which ended the war as far as Bulgaria was concerned.

When the news reached this country that the Bulgars had asked for an armistice, the Germans promptly declared that it was untrue, and that the Bulgar Premier had acted without authority. All doubts were set at rest when the Sobranje, or the Bulgar Parliament, accepted the terms on 4th October. On that day the crafty Ferdinand, knowing that he had wrought the ruin of his land, decided to save his own skin, and at the same time preserve his dynasty, by giving up his throne to his son, Prince Boris. The young man held his throne for a month and then resigned it.

By the armistice agreement Bulgaria was to retire immediately from all parts of Greece and Serbia, break up her army, surrender to the Allies all her means of transport, her railways and boats, and give them control of navigation on the Danube.

All Bulgarian arms and ammunition were to be placed in the hands of the Allies, who were to have the right of occupying all the key positions of the country. These terms made it impossible for Bulgaria to take up arms again.

Immediately the agreement was signed the Bulgars began to leave the invaded territories, and the Allies, hard on their heels, reoccupied the country. The complete breakdown of the Bulgars carried with it the doom of the Austrians in Albania. They were compelled to withdraw by forced marches, and the Italians gave them no rest. On 2nd October British and Italian warships bombarded Durazzo, which was entered by the Italians twelve days later.

When the Bulgars caved in two-thirds of Serbia was at once freed. Step by step the gallant Serbs pressed northward, and on 1st November had the joy of seeing their flag fly once more over their capital, Belgrade. In every Allied country the liberation of Serbia was greeted with unfeigned delight, and many were the warm congratulations tendered to her. "Faithful among the faithless," the Serbs had undergone the most terrible ordeal imaginable: their country had been overrun; their armies had been reduced to a shadow; their boys had perished by droves; their women, girls, and old men had been mercilessly treated by the invaders; half the population had perished, and the country lay waste.

Never for a moment during their long martyrdom had the Serbian soldiers given way to despair. They saw Rumania go under, but still they did not lose heart. With desperate courage the survivors fought on, and now the wheel of fortune had turned full circle. Once more their land was freed; once more they had a country of their own; once more they might return to their homes and kindred and begin the old life anew. Their dogged fidelity and their unquenchable courage had given them high place amongst the heroic nations of the world, and the Great Powers were proud to call them friends and comrades-in-arms. When our Serbian boys in Edinburgh heard the great glad news they sobbed for joy.

The downfall of Bulgaria carried important consequences in its train. Germany was finally cut off from Turkey, and could no longer, even if she had the means, come to the succour of her ally. Turkey's turn was bound to come next, and that of Austria could not long be delayed. The southern frontier of

the Dual Monarchy was now open to an attack just at the point where an invasion could most easily be made. Should the war continue, a new battle-front would be created on the Danube, and the Austrian armies would be forced to give up their vain attempts on North Italy.

The Salonika "side show" had been fully justified. The French General Staff saw from the first the importance of securing the port and making it the base for an advance which would prevent the Bulgars from assisting the Central Powers in other theatres of war. They saw, too, that if the advance proved successful a blow could be struck at the weakest part of the Austrian frontier. The British High Command was at first doubtful as to the wisdom of the plan, but was finally won over. Without British sea power the Salonika army could have accomplished nothing. It lay with its back to the sea, and everything it needed had to be brought to it by ship. The Austrians strove hard to sink our vessels by submarine attack, but never once during the three years of occupation were our communications disturbed. Our command of the seas alone made success in the Balkans possible.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW TURKEY AND AUSTRIA FOLLOWED SUIT.

THE eight days between 18th and 25th September were brimful of victory. While D'Esperey was driving that wedge into the Bulgarian armies which forced them seven days later to sue for peace, Allenby in Palestine was winning the most complete victory of the war. By a masterly stroke he gave the "knock-out" blow to the Turkish armies. So crushing was the defeat that Turkey had no option but to surrender. By this time, as you will learn later on, Austria had also yielded. Germany was now left without an ally, and her case was hopeless.

In Chapter IV. of this volume I brought the story of the Syrian campaign down to the end of August. You will remember that between March and August the Turks held the upper hand. To meet those terrible German onslaughts which began on 21st March, General Allenby was ordered to send to France the 52nd and the 74th Division, nine Yeomanry regiments, and thirty-four British battalions. To replace these tried and capable troops he received reinforcements of Indian soldiers who had not been under fire during the present war. His force was gravely weakened, and he had to fight hard to hold his own right down to the end of August. By 18th September, however, he was sufficiently strong to begin a great offensive.

If you look at the map on page 189, you will see the fifty-five-mile front which our troops were holding on the morning of 18th September. You observe that it ran across the country from the Mediterranean Sea north of Jaffa, through the highlands of Judæa, to the Jordan at a point about a dozen miles north of its outlet in the Dead Sea. The Turks who were facing us had probably eight divisions between the river and the sea,

Indian Troops in Palestine rushing a Turkish Post.

(*By permission of The Illustrated London News.*)

General Allenby in a message to the Viceroy of India said, "Indian cavalry and infantry have taken a leading and brilliant part in the fighting, and have earned a great share in the honours of victory." Our illustration shows a hand-to-hand struggle in which the Turks and their German allies were utterly routed.

and four divisions to the east of the river. The deep, narrow trench in which the Jordan runs cut these forces in twain; for there is no bridge or road crossing the stream until a point is reached about eight miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

Allenby had, therefore, to deal with two armies which could not closely co-operate with each other. He resolved to ignore the four divisions east of the Jordan, and throw all his weight against the eight which were holding the line from the river to the sea. His plan, which I shall now proceed to describe, was bold but simple, and, as you will learn, was successful in the highest degree.

Look at the Jerusalem-Shechem road, which runs through the country across the highlands of Judæa to Nazareth. You observe that it taps the railway to Damascus east of the Plain of Esdraelon. This road was the only good avenue of communication possessed by the enemy between their line and Shechem. Of course there were other tracks by which their troops could advance, but they were difficult to traverse. Allenby's first task was to block up these roads, so that the enemy could not push south. Then he meant to make a strong attack on the highlands of Judæa and firmly pin the Turkish centre. His real blow, however, was to be made along the sea-plain on the extreme right of the Turkish line. If he could break through the intricate system of Turkish defences along the coast, he would force the enemy to swing his line from east to west, to north and south, and would be able to drive him against the obstacle of the river Jordan.

During the night of 18th September we made a general attack all along the front from the sea to the Jordan. To the east of the Jerusalem-Shechem road British and Indian troops blocked all the roads. Then at 6.30 a.m. on the 19th we began a short but fierce bombardment from the land and the sea of the Turkish defences between the coast and Rafat. London, Indian, and French infantry went forward, and in two hours had completely broken through the enemy's positions for a depth of five miles. At once Sir Philip Chetwode was ordered to set his mounted men in motion. Yeomanry, Australian light horse, and Indian cavalry, all in fine condition, galloped through the breach towards the Haifa-Damascus railway.

The great feature of the victory was the bold use made of the cavalry. As they swept forward they found the whole

country littered with abandoned and bombed transport, ammunition dumps, and motor lorries. Continuing their march northwards, the cavalry were twenty-eight miles north of Jaffa by the end of the day. Meanwhile the Arabs had descended on the Turkish railway junction at Deraa, and had severed the railway communications leading north, south, and west from that centre.

By 8 p.m. on 20th September the enemy resistance had everywhere collapsed, save on the Turkish left in the Jordan valley. Our left wing had swung round to the east, and was now astride the railway and the roads running from the west to Shechem. On the north, after sundown, our cavalry left the low ground, got into the hills east of Mount Carmel, and rode over the field of Armageddon.

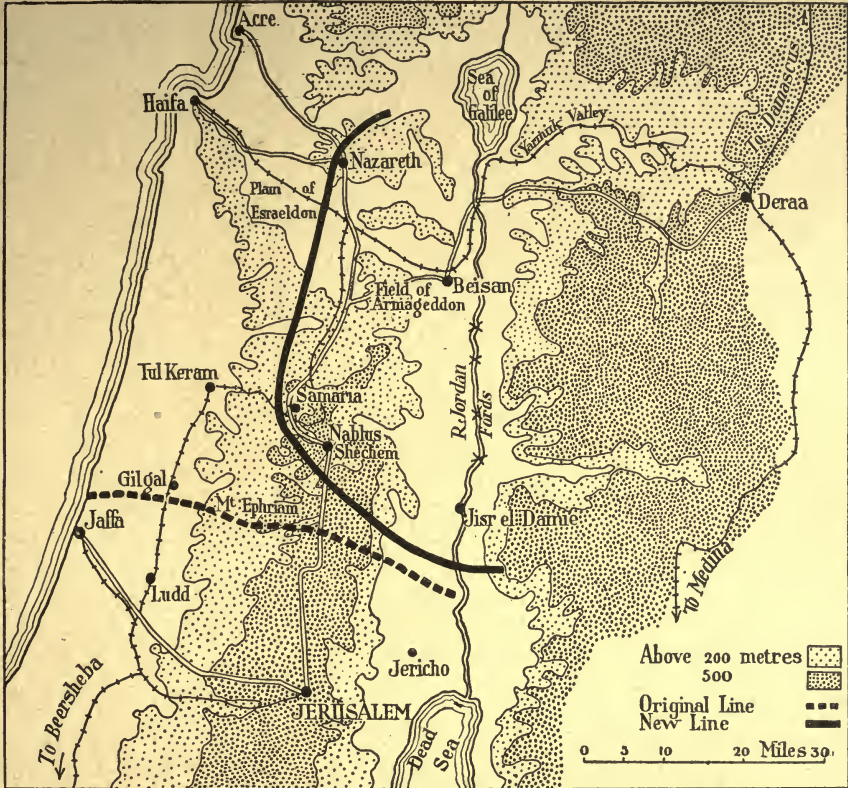
Frequently you have heard the Great War spoken of as Armageddon—that is, a war similar to the struggle described in the Book of Revelation, when " the kings of the earth and of the whole world gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." The word Armageddon is simply the corrupted form of the name of a district around the Canaanite fortress of Megiddo. It was to Canaan what Flanders has been to Europe—a " cockpit " in which the nations fought out their quarrels. Syria and Palestine in early days formed a long alleyway between Egypt on the one hand and Asia Minor and Mesopotamia on the other. For this reason Syria was the natural battlefield of the Powers of the ancient world. In early days, when armies were largely composed of horse-drawn chariots, they had to keep along the coast to avoid the hills of Judæa and Ephraim, which skirt it on the east. They drove forward along the very tracks which our cavalry were now following.

Before the close of 22nd September our mounted men had occupied Nazareth, and were busy rounding up the disorganized masses of enemy troops and sending them into the cages. By this time all avenues of escape open to the enemy, except the fords across the Jordan, had been closed. By 24th September more than forty thousand prisoners had been captured, mainly west of the Jordan. To this large number we may add some twenty thousand casualties. The Seventh and Eighth Turkish Armies had been practically destroyed.

A correspondent thus describes the entry into the birthplace of our Lord :—

" West country yeomanry first entered the town. The capture of the place was highly dramatic. They crossed Esdraelon plain in the dark, having covered fully sixty miles from the Jaffa district within twenty-four hours. Trotting up the steep tortuous roadway to Nazareth just before dawn, they overran a moving convoy of seventy-five motor lorries.

" The German drivers were greatly startled at the apparently miraculous appearance of our horsemen, and in the confusion which followed a number of the lorries were overturned off the narrow mountain road. Still



Map to illustrate Operations in Palestine.

advancing, the yeomanry clattered over the crest into the little hilltop basin where Nazareth lies. The town contained numerous enemy troops. These were still sleeping, believing their line to be unbroken and our army many miles away. The yeomanry quietly made the whole force prisoners.

" The British, however, were only a small party, and when later in the day the German machine gunners from the ridges round the town to the north opened a vigorous fire, they withdrew for a time. The following morning they outflanked the machine-gun posts and re-entered Nazareth.

That night the Turks counter-attacked, but meanwhile our force was strengthened by some Indian Lancers, who galloped out, killed fifty men, and took a hundred prisoners in a slashing moonlight charge. The inhabitants of Nazareth showed the greatest delight at the arrival of the British."

Continuing their northward march, Allenby's troops reached Tiberias on the 25th, and on 1st October entered Damascus. Four days later the commander-in-chief reported that he had taken 71,000 prisoners, with 350 guns, while the Arabs east of Jordan had bagged another 8,000. After a short rest at Damascus British troops pushed on to Beyrout, which was reached on 6th October. By the 17th half Syria was in the hands of the Allies, and eleven days later we were masters of the whole country. Aleppo had been captured, and the Bagdad railway—the main line of communication between Constantinople and the Turkish army in Mesopotamia—had been cut. On the Tigris, fifty miles south of Mosul, after six days of fighting, General Marshall captured the entire Turkish force opposed to him. His prisoners numbered 7,000, and immense booty fell into his hands.

By the end of the month Turkey was out of the war. An armistice was arranged which came into force at noon on the 31st. The Turks agreed to give free passage to our fleet through the Bosporus into the Black Sea, to hand over the forts on the Dardanelles, and to send home as soon as possible all British prisoners of war. The Turkish army was to be demobilized, the war vessels were to be surrendered, and the Allies were to have the right, as in the case of Bulgaria, to occupy any points in the country of military importance. On 13th November the Allied fleet threaded the Dardanelles, and anchored in the Golden Horn. The submission of Turkey was complete.

* * * * * * *

Now we must learn how Austria hoisted the white flag. For more than a year past she had been eager to make terms with the Allies, but so far had not plucked up sufficient courage to do so. The surrender of Bulgaria had left her open to attack at her weakest point, and Germany had her hands so full on the Western front that she was powerless to help her miserable dupe. Another defeat, and Austria would be certain to collapse.

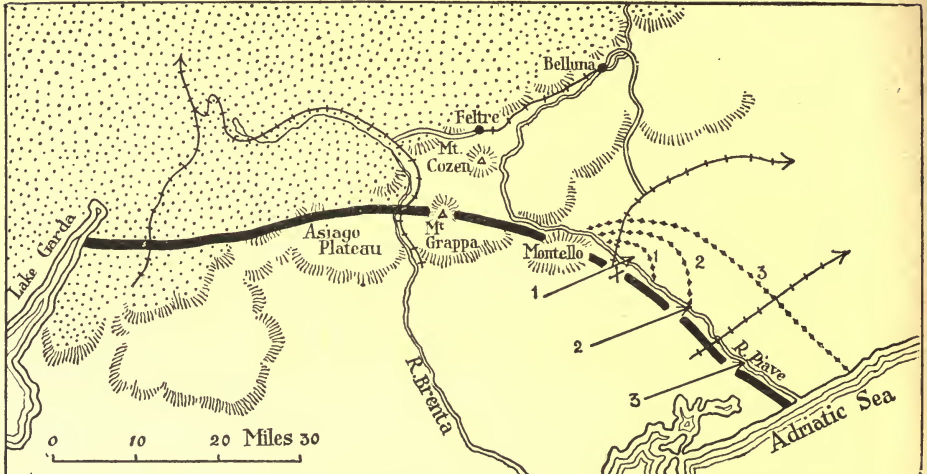
The Turn of the Tide in Italy.

(*By permission of The Graphic.*)

This illustration shows the Anglo-Italian Tenth Army, under Lord Cavan, crossing the Piave on October 25th. This crossing was the first step in that glorious victory which completely overthrew the Austrians, who left 300,000 prisoners and 5,000 guns in the hands of the Allies.

You will remember that in the summer of 1918 the Austrians suffered very heavy losses in their great offensive. They failed to cross the Piave, and also to come down from the mountains to the plain so as to cut the Italian communications that lay but a few miles away. Their disappointment was grievous; and their heart, that had long been failing them, was almost broken.

On 25th October the Austrian line ran from the northern end of Lake Garda, across the Asiago Plateau and the hill country to the Montello Plateau, after which it proceeded along the Piave to the sea. Everywhere the enemy was holding the



Map to illustrate Allied Offensive on the Italian Front.

left or eastern bank of the river. On the evening of that day, however, British troops of Lord Cavan's Anglo-Italian Tenth Army occupied a large island of shingle which stands in the broad bed of the Piave at the point marked "X" on the map. This movement was made secretly, under cover of night, and our men were disguised in Italian uniforms. The whole business was most carefully planned, and was only made possible by the splendid work of Italian engineers. On Friday and Saturday, after we had occupied the island, we established small bridgeheads on the eastern bank opposite. This done, all was ready for a big attempt to separate the army holding the mountain line from that which was holding the river line.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SURRENDER OF AUSTRIA.

ON Sunday, 27th October, the Allies advanced from the bridgeheads and thrust vigorously in the direction of the arrow marked 1. (See map, page 192.) The Austrians were taken by surprise, and were pushed back to the first semicircle of dots shown on the map. They strove hard to resist, but by Tuesday the bulge made by the Allies had been extended to the second semicircle of dots. It was now clear that the enemy was in danger of being outflanked to the south of the bulge. Another blow was now struck along the arrow marked 2, with the result that the Austrian line was flung back to the line of dots marked 3. During these operations they lost heavily in men and guns. You can easily see that this falling back of the Austro-Hungarian army meant that it had now a longer line to hold than formerly. Its resistance had already weakened it gravely, and it was now called upon to hold ground which required more and more men for its defence. These men were not forthcoming.

I want you to notice that by this time the road by the side of the Piave, the only road by which the Austrians could communicate with their comrades on the mountain front, had been lost to them. Notice the little town of Feltre to the north-east of Mount Cozen. From Belluno to Feltre there is a railway, and from Feltre to the more westerly railway which runs through the mass of the Alps there is an excellent road. Only by means of the Piave road, the railway from Belluno, and the road westward from Feltre could the Austrians maintain communication between their army on the mountains and that operating on the river. Once Feltre was seized, the separation of the two armies would be complete ; the enemy's line would be cut in two, and nothing but a miracle could save him from disaster.

On Wednesday, 30th October, by means of sheer hard fighting, the Italians carried the great mass of the Grappa Mountains, which the enemy had held for months. Pushing northward they captured Mount Cozen after a terrible struggle lasting three days, and shortly afterwards occupied Feltre. From that moment the enemy's line was severed, and the armies were forced to retreat. As in the case of the Bulgarian armies, they were forced to retire along lines that divided them still further every step which they took. The Austro-Hungarian armies were by this time mere fragments.

The completeness of the Austrian defeat may be judged from the fact that since 24th October the Allies had captured about three hundred thousand prisoners and more than five thousand guns. The disaster at Caporetto had been more than retrieved. The remains of the Austrian armies fled across the valleys of the Trentino, and across the plains to the Isonzo. When the Italians captured Trent on the 29th the enemy could no longer hope to continue the struggle.

Meanwhile the Dual Monarchy was being torn asunder by internal revolution. On 1st November Austria announced that she had decided, in accordance with the wish that she had several times expressed, to make an "armistice and a peace which would end the struggles of peoples."

On Sunday, 3rd November, Austria accepted the terms of the Allies. She agreed to demobilize her armies, hand over half the artillery and equipment of her armies, leave all Italian territory, permit the Allies to occupy some of her territory, give her conquerors the right of free movement over all her roads and railways, intern all German troops in the country, and restore British prisoners forthwith. Further, she was to surrender three battleships, three light cruisers, nine destroyers, twelve torpedo boats, one minelayer, and six Danube monitors.

The surrender of Austria was a great blow to Germany. Her last ally had abandoned her, and, what was worse, had given the Allies the opportunity of attacking her from the south. Already the Germans knew that their doom was sealed. How they yielded and the Great War came to an end will be told in future chapters.

CHAPTER XXII.

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.—I.

NO pages of this record give me such pleasure to write as those containing brief accounts of the men who were singled out for that decoration which every British soldier dreams of winning. Before the war there were many who thought that the long reign of peace had robbed our people of those martial qualities which distinguished them in days gone by. The Germans firmly believed that we were so sunk in sloth, and so foolishly given over to games and to money-making, that we had lost all our old fighting qualities. Many times I have shown you how grossly deceived they were, but in no case so glaringly as in this particular. Ask any officer who has served at the front, and he will tell you that a British soldier devoid of courage, endurance, and devotion to duty can hardly be discovered. I shall be much surprised if he does not tell you with pride that *his* men were "simply magnificent."

Over and over again I have reminded you that those who wear the red badge of valour are but a handful of those who deserve to wear it. Many a man in this war has done deeds of the highest bravery unseen by his superior officers, and has thus missed the premier reward. Such men have even a more priceless possession: they have the approval of their own consciences.

LIEUTENANT ALBERT BORELLA, M.M., Australian Imperial Force.

Lieutenant Borella was leading the first wave of an attack when he sighted a machine gun that was firing through our barrage and working great havoc. He ran forward right into the barrage, shot two German machine gunners with his revolver,

The Cavalry of Modern Armies—a "Whippet" Tank. [*British official photograph.*

and captured the weapon. He then led his party, which by this time had been reduced to ten men with two Lewis guns, against a trench very strongly held by the enemy. Using his revolver, and later on a rifle, he accounted for many of the enemy, and by the force of his leading and fearless example made an end of the resistance. Two large dugouts were bombed, and thirty prisoners taken. When the trench was captured the enemy counter-attacked in strong force, and on the second occasion with troops that outnumbered Lieutenant Borella's platoon by ten to one. Nevertheless, his little band of heroes not only held their own, but drove back the enemy with very heavy loss.

Sergeant John Meikle, M.M., Seaforth Highlanders.

When Sergeant Meikle's company was held up by machine-gun fire he dashed forward revolver in hand against the weapons that were doing the mischief, shot down some of the gunners, and laid out the remainder with a heavy stick. This done, he stood up and waved to his comrades to come on. Shortly afterwards progress was checked by another machine gun, which mowed down most of the sergeant's comrades. The situation was desperate, but Sergeant Meikle was equal to it. He seized the rifle and bayonet of a fallen comrade, and again rushed forward to repeat his former exploit. When he was about to attack the gunners a shot ended his gallant life. He had not, however, fallen in vain, for two men who followed him up were able to put the gun out of action. Nothing could exceed Sergeant Meikle's utter disregard of personal danger, and his example will long remain an inspiration to the Seaforths. Prior to the war he was a clerk in the Caledonian station at Nitshill, Renfrewshire. In November 1917 he won the Military Medal, and on his return home was given a public welcome and presented with a gold watch by his admiring fellow-villagers.

Corporal Joseph Kaeble, Quebec Regiment.

A bevy of Canadian soldiers now appears in this proud record. Most of them won the Victoria Cross for their magnificent valour and self-sacrifice in putting machine guns out of action. The first of them, Corporal Kaeble, was in charge of a Lewis-gun section in the front-line trenches at the time when the enemy attempted a strong raid. While shells were falling fast and thick around him, the gallant corporal remained on the parapet of his trench with his Lewis gun shouldered ready

for action. As soon as the barrage lifted he saw about fifty of the enemy advancing. By this time only one man in his trench was unwounded. Nevertheless, he jumped over the parapet, and, firing from his hip, emptied magazine after magazine into the advancing enemy. Several times he was wounded by flying fragments of shells and bombs, but he continued to fire until he had brought the advance to a halt. Then in the moment of his victory he fell back into the trench mortally wounded. Even in the agonies of death he did not cease to fire. As his last bullets sped towards the retreating Germans he shouted, "Keep it up, boys; do not let them get through! We must stop them!" Shortly afterwards he died. He had held up fifty of the enemy, and had saved the British line. All honour to this fearless and self-sacrificing Canadian.

LIEUTENANT JAMES EDWARD TAIT, M.C., Manitoba Regiment.

This gallant officer, finding that our advance had been checked by intense machine-gun fire from a concealed nest, seized a rifle and bayonet, and, dashing forward alone, killed the gunner of one of the weapons. Inspired by his example, his men rushed the position and captured twelve machine guns and twenty prisoners. Thanks to Lieutenant Tait's valour, the way was cleared for his battalion to advance. Later on, when the enemy subjected our positions to intense bombardment and then descended upon them, this gallant Canadian showed outstanding courage and leadership. He received his death-wound from a shell, but continued to direct and aid his men as long as a spark of life remained.

CORPORAL HERMAN JAMES GOOD, Quebec Regiment.

Corporal Good displayed similar heroism in face of three machine guns which were seriously delaying the progress of his unit. He dashed forward alone, killed several of the gunners, and captured the remainder. Later on, while still alone, he sighted an enemy battery of 5.9 guns in action. Along with three men of his section, he charged the battery under point-blank fire, and captured the crews of three guns. A more amazing exploit has rarely been recorded.

LIEUTENANT JOHN BRILLIANT, M.C., late Quebec Regiment.

Lieutenant Brilliant had charge of a company which he led in attack for two days with the utmost fearlessness and devotion. Such energy and ability did he display that his company was

able to advance twelve miles. On the first day of the operations the left flank of his unit was held up in the usual way by a machine gun. At once he rushed out alone, killed two of the gunners, and captured the weapon. Though wounded, he refused to leave his command.

Later in the day heavy machine-gun fire again checked his advance. He crept forward, and after spying out the position, organized two platoons, which he led straight for the stronghold, with the result that he captured the guns. No fewer than fifteen of the weapons were seized, and 150 of the enemy held up their hands. During the onset Lieutenant Brilliant shot down five of the enemy with his revolver. During the fighting he was again wounded; but, after receiving first aid, rejoined his company and led them forward again. Some time later he sighted a field gun firing on his command over open sights. At the head of a few of his men he dashed forward for the purpose of "rushing" the gun. After advancing about four hundred yards he was wounded for the third time. Nevertheless, he "stuck it" for another two hundred yards, when he fell unconscious from exhaustion and loss of blood, and shortly afterwards died. The official record tells us that the lieutenant's wonderful example inspired his men with such enthusiasm and dash that they carried out the operations successfully.

Sergeant Raphael Louis Zengel, M.M., Saskatchewan Regiment.

Sergeant Zengel was leading his platoon forward to the attack, when he discovered that there was a gap on his flank, and that an enemy machine gun was firing at close range into the advancing line. Immediately he ran ahead of his platoon for two hundred yards, and, single-handed, attacked the machine-gun emplacement, killing the officer and gunner and dispersing the crew. By his boldness and prompt action he undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his comrades. Later, when his battalion was again held up, he showed great skill in directing his fire, so as to "knock out" the enemy machine guns that were checking the advance. Shortly afterwards an enemy shell rendered him unconscious; but as soon as he recovered he "carried on" as formerly. With such a leader his men, like those of Wellington, were ready to go anywhere and do anything.

Corporal Frederick George Coppens, Manitoba Regiment.

While Corporal Coppens's platoon was advancing it sud-

The Might of Britain rolling back

Our illustration shows a characteristic scene on the Western front during the final days of the war. German prisoners are being marched back to the base.

:he Invader from the Soil of France. [*By permission of The Illustrated London News.*

Motor lorries, guns, tanks, and troops are pressing forward on the heels of the Hun, while troops of

denly came under fire from many machine guns. The men could neither advance nor retire, and there was no cover from the harassing fire. Unless something was done immediately the whole platoon would be swept away. Calling on four of his men, Corporal Coppens sprang up, and, in the face of a hail of bullets, rushed towards the machine guns. All four of his comrades were killed, and he himself was wounded, but was not put out of action. Bleeding and torn, he struggled on, killed four of the men working the first gun, and received the surrender of four others. This done, he rejoined his platoon, and went forward with it to its final objective. Even then he refused to leave the line until he was assured that it was secure, and his officer had ordered him to make his way to a dressing-station.

ACTING-CORPORAL ALEXANDER BRERETON, Manitoba Regiment.

No cover was available when a line of enemy machine guns suddenly opened fire on Corporal Brereton's platoon. Unless the guns could be silenced not a man could survive. The gallant corporal saw that only by self-sacrifice could his comrades be saved. Without a moment's delay he sprang forward and rushed to the nearest machine-gun post, where he shot the gunner and bayoneted another who tried to take the place of his fallen comrade. The remaining members of the crew at once surrendered. This gallant action so inspired the Manitobans that they rushed the position and captured five posts, one after the other.

PRIVATE JOHN BERNARD CROAK, Quebec Regiment.

Private Croak, having become separated from his section, fell in with a machine-gun nest, which he bombed and silenced, whereupon the crew surrendered. Shortly afterwards he was severely wounded. Nevertheless, he rejoined his platoon just at the moment when a strong point was holding it up. For the second time that day he went forward, and was almost immediately followed by the remainder of the platoon, all eager to emulate his example. He was the first to reach the enemy post, and was foremost in the hand-to-hand struggle which resulted in the capture of three machine guns and the surrender of all the surviving defenders. Later on, to the great grief of his comrades, he succumbed to his wounds. Few more dogged fighters than Private Croak have given their lives for their country.

SERGEANT PERCY CLYDE STATTON, M.M., Australian Imperial Force.

By skilful use of his Lewis gun, Sergeant Statton silenced two machine-gun posts and enabled his battalion to continue its advance. Again it was brought to a standstill on the left. One of our assaulting detachments was shot down to a man while knocking out the first of the guns that were causing the check. Then the gallant sergeant came upon the scene. Armed only with a revolver, and in broad daylight, he rushed four of the posts in succession, capturing two of them and killing five of the enemy. The crews of the remaining two posts thereupon retired, and as they did so were wiped out by Lewis-gun fire. Later in the evening the sergeant, not yet weary in well-doing, went out into the open and brought in two badly-wounded men. The success of our attack was mainly due to his quick decision and determined pluck.

SERGEANT RICHARD CHARLES TRAVIS, D.C.M., M.M., Otago Rifles, New Zealand Force.

We were about to surprise the enemy ; but before we could do so an impassable block formed of barbed wire had to be removed. Sergeant Travis, though well aware that he could not hope to return, volunteered to go forward in broad daylight, crawl past enemy posts, and destroy the block with bombs, so that the attacking parties could pass through. This he did successfully. A few minutes later, when a bombing party on the right of our attack was held up by two enemy machine guns, and the whole operation threatened to end in failure, the sergeant rushed the position, killed the crews, and captured the guns. An enemy officer and three men then attacked him and tried to retake the guns, but the sergeant was more than a match for them. He killed four of them, and was thus the means of permitting the bombing party to advance and carry the enemy's position. Twenty-four hours later, while he was going from post to post encouraging his men, he was killed by a shell.

SERGEANT THOMAS JAMES HARRIS, M.M., Royal West Kent Regiment.

Hostile machine guns concealed in standing crops or in shell-holes were gravely impeding our advance. Sergeant Harris led his section against one of these posts, and, after killing seven of the enemy, captured it. Later on, he twice went out single-

handed against machine guns that were harassing our line. He captured the first gun and killed the crew, but while attacking the second was himself killed. The official record tells us that the superb courage and devotion of this N.C.O. enabled his battalion to advance without delay and without undue loss. "Throughout the operations he showed a total disregard for his own personal safety, and set a magnificent example to all ranks."

SERGEANT SAMUEL FORSYTH, New Zealand Engineers.

Sergeant Forsyth, when going forward with his company, showed the utmost dash in leading attacks upon four machine guns, which he captured before they could do much damage to our men. Later on, several other machine guns opened fire on his company. In the most daring manner he crawled out and discovered the whereabouts of the nest. Then he set off to find a Tank, but while on the way was hit. As soon as his wound had been bandaged he got in touch with a Tank, and, though machine guns were trained on him, began to lead the Tank into a favourable position for wiping out the strong point. Anti-Tank guns, however, put the Tank out of action. Not to be beaten, he organized the crew of the Tank, and led them, along with several men of his section, to a position from which the machine guns could be outflanked. In the midst of heavy fire he disposed his command in such a way that the machine gunners were forced to retire. This enabled our advance to continue. Unhappily, in the very moment of success, this gallant N.C.O. was killed by a sniper. His coolness, courage, and readiness of resource made him a tower of strength during a difficult and dangerous time.

LANCE-SERGEANT EDWARD SMITH, D.C.M., Lancashire Fusiliers.

Prior to the war Sergeant Smith was a collier of Maryport, Cumberland. His grandfather, "Old John," had been coxswain of the local lifeboat, and his father was one of the crew. At school young Smith was a leader in the playground games, and his schoolmaster said he "would go through fire and water." He was one of the crack swimmers of the place, and was but nineteen years of age when he won the Victoria Cross for the following exploit. While in command of a platoon he rushed the garrison of a machine gun at the bayonet's point. As he advanced, some of the enemy flung bombs at him, but

happily without effect. Regardless of danger, and almost without halting in his stride, he shot and killed at least six of the enemy. Later on, seeing another unit in difficulties, he led his men to it and helped it to capture its objective. On the following day, after an enemy counter-attack, he advanced with a section and restored a portion of the line. Over and over again he showed the daring spirit of his forbears. He was fond of quoting his grandfather's favourite saying, "Whatever man dare do, I dare do."

ACTING-SERGEANT JOHN COLLEY, M.M., Lancashire Fusiliers.

Sergeant Colley was in command of a platoon that had been ordered to hold a position at all costs. When the enemy counter-attacked in force, he rushed ahead without waiting for orders, and rallied and directed the men holding the forward line. So quickly, however, did the Germans advance that they had already gained a footing in the trench. Sergeant Colley thereupon formed a defensive flank and held it, although out of the two platoons engaged only three men remained unwounded and he himself was badly hit. Thanks to his prompt action and determination, the enemy was prevented from breaking through, and was afterwards driven off. The courage and doggedness of Sergeant Colley saved a very critical situation.

PIPER JAMES RICHARDSON, Manitoba Regiment.

Prior to an attack, Piper Richardson persuaded his commanding officer to let him play his company "over the top." The men went forward to the sound of the pibroch, and, as they approached their objective, found themselves face to face with very strong wire and assailed by a heavy fire, under which many of them fell. Realizing how necessary it was that the men's spirits should be kept up to fighting pitch, the gallant piper marched to and fro amidst the bullets, playing his most stirring tunes. The effect was wonderful. The men gathered themselves, and with a rush carried the wire and the trench beyond. Later on, while bombing operations were in progress, the piper was detailed to take a wounded comrade and some prisoners to the rear. After proceeding some two hundred yards, he remembered that he had left his pipes behind him. He was strongly urged not to return for them, but insisted on doing so, and from that moment was never seen again. No doubt he made the great sacrifice.

Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Annesley West, D.S.O., M.C., North Irish Horse and Tank Corps.

This very gallant officer distinguished himself in hours of dire danger by courage, fine leadership, and self-sacrifice. On one occasion, when the infantry had lost their bearings in a dense fog, he reorganized the scattered men, and, with an utter disregard for his personal safety, led them to their objective in face of heavy machine-gun fire. On a later occasion he was in command of a battalion of "Whippets," which were to follow up and make good the advance of infantry and heavy Tanks. In order to keep touch with the progress of the battle, so that his "Whippets" might come into action at the proper time, he rode forward to the front line, and arrived there just at the moment when the enemy were advancing to a counter-attack. The infantry battalion to which he attached himself had lost many officers, and its flanks were exposed. Realizing that there was a danger of the battalion giving way under the extremely heavy fire, he rallied the harassed men and took over the command. To and fro he rode, in the face of certain death, crying out, "Stick it, men; show them fight; for God's sake, put up a good fight." He fell riddled with machine-gun bullets. His magnificent bravery put the hearts of lions into our men, and they beat off the attack. It would be impossible to overpraise the gallantry and self-sacrifice of this devoted officer.

Corporal David Ferguson Hunter, Highland Light Infantry.

I have already described the heroism of this gallant corporal and his comrades—the Seven Men of Mœuvres. (See page 133.) He was a native of the mining village of Kingseat, now part of Dunfermline. Prior to the war he worked in a colliery. It may interest you to read the following account of the exploit which he gave to a reporter after his return to his native town:—

"We went into the line on 16th September, and took over an outpost on the outskirts of Mœuvres. Nothing unusual occurred on the first night except the shelling, to which we were accustomed. Everything was quiet until dusk on the following day, when Fritz started to make things hum a bit. At the finish of an hour's bombardment the enemy came over in mass and recaptured the village.

One of the Bravest Deeds of the War: Colonel Annesley West encouraging his men to "stick it."

(From the drawing by Louis Raemaekers. By permission of The Graphic.)

" At that time we did not know that we were alone with the enemy. Had it not been that our rations had not come forward, I don't think we should have known that we were surrounded.

" On the first night after Fritz attacked and captured the village he left us pretty much to ourselves, except for the presence of an occasional patrol. We got rid of the patrols all right. Things were pretty quiet on the following day, but when night came we had an idea that there was a war on. Fritz started his artillery again, and had another go at us; but we managed to hold him back all right.

" After things quietened down a bit I thought our best plan would be to try to get in touch with our own lines, if possible. For that purpose I sent out two men, with instructions to be very careful, and try to crawl through some way or other. As it happened, one of them got killed; but instead of his mate coming back to our post, he gamely carried on, and got through to our own lines. For that I am more than thankful, because that was what saved our lives. Unfortunately, he was wounded a couple of times before he managed to get in; but he was able to report that our post was still holding out. I think it must have been too late at this time of the morning for our lads to do anything to help us, as daylight was just breaking.

" Just at dusk on our last night in the post our guns opened out, and if Fritz stood that it was no use our trying to frighten him. As usual, our barrage put 'the wind right up him,' and he scampered through the village and fields as hard as he could go."

CHAPTER XXIII.

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.—II.

LIEUTENANT DAVID LOWE MACINTYRE, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Lieutenant MacIntyre, when acting as adjutant of his battalion, showed remarkable courage and coolness during a time when the enemy was subjecting our line to violent shell and machine-gun fire. He went to and fro encouraging his men, and by his example and cheering words inspired them with confidence. Three days later he was in command of the firing-line during an attack, and again bore himself gallantly. When the advancing wave came up against barbed wire, he went forward to spy out the situation before leading his men forward. On one occasion, when extra strong wire obstacles were encountered, he organized a party to make gaps through the entanglements, and he himself supervised the operations. Later, when the greater part of our line was held up, he rallied a small party, pushed through the enemy's barrage, and pursued a machine-gun detachment which took refuge in a "pill-box." He stormed the strong point, killed three of the enemy, and captured an officer and ten men, as well as five machine guns. One after the other, he and his party seized three "pill boxes," and disposed of the occupants. Some time afterwards, when he had been relieved of his command in the firing-line, his battalion was ordered to take up a defensive position. Its right flank was exposed, and Lieutenant MacIntyre volunteered to go forward on a scouting expedition. While so engaged, an enemy machine gun opened fire on him. At once he rushed it single-handed, put the team to flight, and returned with the gun. The official record tells us that the success of the advance was largely due to the lieutenant's fine leadership, personal gallantry, and readiness of

resource. It will interest you to learn that he was a genuine Highlander, having been born in the island of Islay. When war broke out he was a cadet in George Watson's College, Edinburgh. Subsequently, at nineteen years of age, he went to the University and joined the O.T.C. He was subsequently gazetted to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, in which his two younger brothers were serving.

LIEUTENANT HAROLD SEWELL, Royal West Kent Regiment and Tank Corps.

Another "Whippet" hero now appears in our record. When in command of a section of light Tanks, Lieutenant Sewell noticed that one of them, side-slipping into a large shell-hole, had overturned, and was in flames. At once he left his own Tank and ran across the open ground under heavy fire. He discovered that the door of the overturned Tank had become jammed against the side of the shell-hole. Unless it could be speedily forced, the occupants would be burned to death. Lieutenant Sewell, working like an inspired giant, dug away the side of the shell-hole, and, clearing the door, released the crew. Had he not done so, all within the Tank would have perished in agony.

After this rescue he saw one of his own crew lying wounded behind his Tank. Again he dashed across the open on another errand of mercy. While doing so he was hit. Nevertheless he pushed on, and, while tending the wounds of his comrade, was hit again—this time fatally. To realize the heroism of this splendid young officer, you must remember that as soon as he left his Tank he was in full view and within short range of enemy machine guns and snipers in rifle-pits. He could hardly hope to escape, but this did not deter him. The sight of friends in distress banished all thought of self, and he gladly gave his life to succour them.

SERGEANT ROBERT SPALL, Eastern Ontario Regiment.

During an enemy counter-attack Sergeant Spall's platoon was cut off. Standing on the parapet with a Lewis gun, he made havoc of the advancing Germans and forced the survivors to retire. Then directing his men into a sap some seventy-five yards from the enemy, he again climbed the parapet, and with his Lewis gun held up another advance. While he was so engaged he fell to rise no more. He had given his life for his comrades. He knew that his platoon could not be

A French Soldier's Heroic Death.

(*From the picture by Paul Thiriat. By permission of The Graphic.*)

During a French attack on a village a soldier in a Whippet Tank fought on until his last bullet had been fired and his machine blown up. When his body was found by his comrades he was still firmly clutching his empty rifle.

saved unless some one was prepared to devote his life to their succour. Without a thought of self, he twice stood up in full face of the enemy, and plied his gun with such effect that the advancing waves were checked. A poetess speaks of "the awful beauty of self-sacrifice." It was fully exemplified in Sergeant Spall's heroic deeds.

CORPORAL HARRY GARNET BEDFORD MILNER, Central Ontario Regiment.

Corporal Milner during an attack was severely wounded, but refused to withdraw to a dressing-station. Weak and bleeding as he was, he rushed a hostile machine-gun post single-handed, killed the crew, and turned the gun on the enemy. Later, with two companions, he captured another gun, and then charged an enemy bombing post, bayoneting two of the garrison and putting the remainder to flight. While so engaged he fell mortally wounded.

PRIVATE THOMAS DINESEN, Quebec Regiment.

Private Dinesen performed prodigies of valour during ten hours of hand-to-hand fighting which resulted in the capture of over a mile of trenches strongly garrisoned and stubbornly defended by the enemy. Five times in succession he rushed forward alone and put hostile machine guns out of action. No fewer than twelve of the enemy fell before his bombs and bayonet. The extraordinary valour and skill of this gallant private won the admiration of his fellows, and impelled them at a very critical time to display similar heroism.

LIEUTENANT ALFRED EDWARD GABY, Australian Imperial Forces.

Lieutenant Gaby was leading his men forward, when they were checked at the wire in front of an enemy trench. The enemy was in force about forty yards behind the wire, and was covering a gap through the entanglement with machine guns and rifles. It was impossible to make headway through this opening, so Lieutenant Gaby discovered another gap, and, pushing through it, attacked the trench single-handed, despite the fire that was directed upon him. Running along the parapet, still all alone, he emptied his revolver into the men lining the trench, drove the machine crews from their guns, and forced fifty of the enemy to surrender. He also captured four machine guns. Then he reorganized his men, and led them on triumphantly to his final objective.

Three days later, during an attack, this gallant officer once more led his men forward with the same dash and skill. Though very heavy fire from rifles and machine guns swept down upon our line, Lieutenant Gaby walked from post to post encouraging his men to make the captured trenches defensible with all speed. While engaged on this duty he was killed by a sniper.

Chief Petty Officer George Prowse, R.N.V.R.

During an advance a portion of this gallant seaman's company was broken up by heavy machine-gun fire from an enemy strong point. Collecting the men around him, he led them with great coolness and bravery against the nest, with the result that five of the weapons and twenty-three of the garrison were captured. Later he led forward a patrol, and, in spite of much enemy opposition, seized an important piece of high ground. On another occasion he attacked, single-handed, an enemy ammunition limber that was trying to carry off captured shells. He killed the three men in charge of the limber, and captured it. Two days later he was again conspicuous. With a Lewis gun he covered the advance of his company, and afterwards discovered two machine-gun positions in a village. Without a thought for his own safety, he rushed forward with a small party and attacked the guns, which were stationed in concrete emplacements. So spirited was the attack that the posts were captured, six of the enemy were killed, and thirteen were taken prisoner. Our loss, however, was severe: Chief Petty Officer Prowse was the sole survivor. Nevertheless the sacrifice of life led to gain, for by the daring and heroism of those who fell, the battalion on the right was able to push into the village without molestation. The official record tells us that throughout the whole operations the superb courage, magnificent example and leadership of Chief Petty Officer Prowse were an inspiration to all his comrades.

Sergeant Reginald Stanley Judson, D.C.M., M.M., Auckland Regiment, New Zealand Forces.

During an attack on enemy positions, Sergeant Judson was detailed to lead a small bombing party. Despite heavy fire, he pushed forward and captured a machine gun. He then advanced alone up a sap, and by means of bombs drove three machine-gun crews, consisting of two officers and about ten men, before him. Leaping out of the trench, he ran ahead of them and called upon them to surrender. Instead of doing so, they fired

on him; but he threw a bomb in their midst, and then, jumping into the sap, killed two of the enemy and put the rest to flight. This prompt and gallant action not only saved many lives, but enabled the advance to be continued unopposed.

LANCE-SERGEANT WALTER SIMPSON, Lincolnshire Regiment.

Sergeant Simpson was in charge of a daylight patrol sent out to reconnoitre and gain touch with a neighbouring division. When he and his party reached the west bank of a certain river they sighted an enemy machine-gun post on the opposite side. The river was too deep to ford, so the sergeant plunged into the water and swam across. Having done so, he crept, all alone, to the rear of the machine-gun post, shot the sentry and another man, and forced four others to surrender. Later on a ford was discovered, and the officer of the patrol with a comrade crossed and continued their scouting operations. They had not gone far when machine-gun and rifle fire opened upon them, and the officer was wounded. There was no cover, but the sergeant succeeded in getting the wounded officer away safely in spite of the heavy fire. The success of the scouting operations was greatly due to the very gallant conduct of this N.C.O.

PRIVATE SAMUEL NEEDHAM, Bedfordshire Regiment.

Private Needham was out with a strong patrol when the enemy suddenly attacked, and forced our men back in confusion. At this critical moment he turned, and, running towards the enemy, opened rapid fire at point-blank range. The advancing Germans were checked sufficiently long for the commander of the patrol to reorganize his men and advance once more. The casualties on our side were very heavy; but, thanks mainly to Private Needham, all the wounded were brought back. But for our hero's bold and determined stand, the whole patrol would have been cut off. A single man, by his daring and devotion, had thus saved a strong detachment from disaster. Unhappily, this gallant private did not live long to enjoy his honour. His Victoria Cross was announced on 31st October, and on the 18th of the following month he was reported dead.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CYRUS WESLEY PECK, D.S.O., Manitoba Regiment.

Colonel Peck's command went forward to its first objective, but could advance no further because of intense machine-gun fire from the enemy's right flank. The situation was highly

dangerous, and there was every prospect that the command would be wiped out. At this juncture Colonel Peck pushed forward across ground literally swept by bullets, and spied out the situation. Returning to his battalion, he made arrangements to protect his flanks, and again went forward to some Tanks that made a timely appearance on the scene. He gave them the necessary directions, and they crashed into the machine-gun posts, thus enabling a Canadian infantry battalion to go forward. This advance was rendered possible by the splendid courage and skilful leadership of the gallant colonel, who risked his life many times during the operations.

COMMANDER DANIEL MARCUS WILLIAM BEAK, D.S.O., M.C., R.N.V.R.

Commander Beak won the Victoria Cross for heroic conduct during a long series of difficult operations. By skilful and fearless leadership he enabled his men to capture four enemy positions in succession, and thus paved the way for the advance of other battalions. Four days later, when dazed by a blow from a shell fragment, his battalion came under extremely heavy gun-fire, and was thrown into confusion. The brigade commander was absent at the time; but our hero took his place, reorganized the men, and led them on to their objective. Later on, when another attack was held up, he rushed forward with only one companion, and, breaking up a nest of machine guns, returned with nine or ten prisoners. These incidents are only a few examples of the fine work which he did throughout the operations. His fearless example gave his men courage and confidence to make headway in the face of terrible difficulties.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT WILLIAM ALLISON WHITE, M.G. Corps.

Our infantry were being held up by an enemy machine gun, when Lieutenant White rushed forward alone, shot three of the gunners, and captured the weapon. On a later occasion he and two comrades attacked another gun. His companions were shot down, but he went on alone, bayoneted or shot the team of five men, and seized the gun. On a third occasion, when the progress of our troops was delayed in a similar way, he collected a small party of men, and at their head rushed the position and inflicted heavy loss on the garrison. Then he occupied the post, and turned the captured weapons on the enemy. His fine example stirred his men to similar heroism, and did much to give us success at a time when the outlook was dark indeed.

British Troops crossing the Dry Bed of the Canal du Nord

(*From the picture by A. Forestier. By*

During the advance on Cambrai (see Chap. XXVI.) a formidable obstacle to our troops was the Canal
some places Tanks plunged into the bed of the canal and formed a bridge over which other Tanks crossed.
the left is Bourlon Wood, with British shells bursting over it. As will be seen, the crossing of the canal

and mounting the opposite Bank with Scaling Ladders.

permission of The Illustrated London News.)

du Nord. Where it was full of water, as at Bellenglise, the men crossed by wading and swimming. In The above drawing illustrates the crossing of the dry bed. Just beyond the towpath on the far side to called for great skill and determination.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES SMITH RUTHERFORD, M.C., M.M., Quebec Regiment.

Lieutenant Rutherford, while leading an assaulting party, found himself a considerable distance ahead of his men. At the same moment he saw a "pill-box" heavily manned by a strong company of the enemy, some of whom were outside the little fort. He waved his revolver to his men, and beckoned to them to advance. Then he told the Germans they were surrounded, and called upon them to surrender. An enemy officer denied that they were surrounded, and invited the lieutenant to enter the "pill-box"—an invitation which he discreetly declined. He continued, however, to insist that they were surrounded; and, by dint of masterly bluff, induced the whole party of forty-five, including two officers, to hold up their hands. He persuaded the enemy officer to cease the fire of a machine gun, and seized the opportunity to hurry his men to his support. As they advanced, he noticed that the right assaulting party was being held up by fire from another "pill-box." With a Lewis-gun section he captured this little fort, and bagged another thirty-five prisoners. I need not tell you that the courage and skill of Lieutenant Rutherford were a wonderful incentive to his men, and that it inspired them to press home the attack on very strong positions.

SERGEANT LAURENCE CALVERT, M.M., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

You cannot fail to notice in reading these accounts that the chief obstacles to our advance were the machine guns which the enemy cunningly placed in positions from which they could work havoc on our battalions as they pushed forward. During the days when we were on the heels of the Hun, almost the only opportunities for the display of individual heroism were afforded by attacks upon these deadly weapons. Sergeant Calvert was one of the large band of machine-gun heroes. Severe enfilade fire was beating down upon our men, when, all alone, he rushed two guns, shot or bayoneted the teams, and cleared away the death-trap that barred our victorious way.

SERGEANT HARRY JOHN LAURENT, New Zealand Rifle Brigade.

Our men had carried an enemy position, and we were eager to make it a jumping-off place for a further attack. Sergeant Laurent, with a party of twelve, was detailed to follow up the enemy with all speed and keep him on the run. With his

dozen companions he discovered the whereabouts of the German support line, which was very strongly held. Nevertheless he and his little band fell suddenly upon the supports, and engaged them in hand-to-hand fighting of the most desperate character, with the result that thirty of the enemy were killed and one officer and one hundred and eleven men surrendered. This daring exploit was completely successful, thanks mainly to the splendid gallantry and enterprise of Sergeant Laurent. His party emerged from the fray with only four casualties.

SERGEANT ARTHUR GEORGE KNIGHT, Alberta Regiment.

We had made an unsuccessful attack, and the enemy was pushing forward very rapidly. At this critical moment Sergeant Knight led a bombing section forward under very heavy fire, and engaged the Germans at close quarters. A machine gun opened fire, and the party was held up ; whereupon the sergeant dashed on ahead of his men, bayoneted several enemy machine gunners and men in charge of trench mortars, and drove off the rest in confusion. He then brought forward a Lewis gun, and fired with deadly effect on the retreating enemy. In a subsequent advance he saw a party of about thirty of the enemy dive into a deep tunnel in the side of a trench. He again ran forward all alone, and having killed one officer and two N.C.O.'s, captured twenty prisoners. Still later he attacked, single-handed, another enemy party and routed it. On each occasion he showed wonderful valour under fire at close range, and his example was most inspiring. Unhappily, this gallant Canadian was afterwards fatally wounded.

CORPORAL JOHN MCNAMARA, East Surrey Regiment.

Corporal McNamara was using a telephone in a trench abandoned by the enemy and occupied by his battalion, when he learned that a determined enemy counter-attack was about to be made. Taking a revolver from a wounded officer, he rushed towards the enemy, and shot down several of them. Then seizing a Lewis gun, he continued to fire until it jammed. By this time he was alone in the post. Having destroyed the telephone, he joined the nearest British party, and again directed a fierce Lewis-gun fire on the enemy. So effective did this fire prove that the enemy was held up until reinforcements arrived. But for Corporal McNamara's splendid courage and "stick" other neighbouring posts could not have held on. His devotion to duty was worthy of the highest praise.

LANCE-CORPORAL HARRY WEALE, Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

Enemy machine guns were holding up a battalion, and our hero was ordered to clear away the obstacles. He advanced with a Lewis gun, but it failed him; whereupon he threw it down, and with rifle and bayonet rushed the nearest post, killed the machine-gun crew, and dashed on towards the next. As he approached, the men serving the other guns fled, and he followed them. The result of his very dashing deed was that all the guns were captured, and the way was cleared for our advance.

LANCE-CORPORAL ALFRED WILCOX, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry.

Heavy machine-gun fire at close range was holding up his company, when, without waiting for orders, he rushed ahead, bombed the nearest machine-gun post, killed the gunner, and put the weapon out of action. He was then attacked by an enemy bombing party. Arming himself with German grenades which he picked up, he led a small party against the next gun, and destroyed it also. By this time he had only one companion left. Nevertheless he " carried on," bombed up a trench, and having captured a fourth gun, rejoined his platoon. Throughout this series of exploits he displayed extraordinary courage, judgment, and enterprise.

LANCE-CORPORAL ERNEST SEAMAN, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Lance-Corporal Seaman gained the highest award of valour for similar heroism in attacking nests of enemy machine guns when the right flank of his company was held up. He rushed forward under heavy fire with a Lewis gun, engaged the position alone, and succeeded in capturing two machine guns and twelve prisoners, after killing one officer and two men. Later on the same day he rushed another machine-gun position under heavy fire, but was shot dead before he could repeat his former exploit. It would be impossible to overpraise the courage and dash of this devoted N.C.O.

LANCE-CORPORAL WILLIAM HENRY METCALF, M.M., Manitoba Regiment.

When the right flank of his battalion was held up by intense machine-gun fire he rushed forward to a passing Tank, and, walking in front of it with a signal flag, directed it along an enemy trench amidst a perfect hail of bullets and bombs. The

Tank completely crushed the enemy strong points and inflicted heavy loss on the enemy. Thanks to Corporal Metcalf's enterprise and devotion, a very critical situation was relieved. Later on he was wounded, but he continued to advance until he was ordered into a shell-hole to receive first aid.

PRIVATE HUGH McIVER, M.M., Royal Scots.

Private McIver was a native of Newton, Cambuslang, and was the second soldier of that town to receive the Victoria Cross. He was the first Kitchener recruit to be enrolled in Cambuslang, and in July 1916 was awarded the Military Medal for distinguished courage at Montauban. On his return home his fellow-townsmen gave him a great reception, and presented him with many gifts. In October 1917 he was wounded, but made a complete recovery. Returning again to France, he was awarded a bar to his Military Medal for engaging in a daring and successful night assault. In civil life he was a miner, and he was twenty-six years of age when he met a hero's death on the field of battle. The deed which gave him his crowning decoration called for the utmost heroism. In spite of heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, he carried messages through the zone of death. Single-handed, he also pursued an enemy scout into a machine-gun post, and having killed six of the garrison, captured twenty prisoners and a couple of machine guns. This gallant action enabled his company to advance unchecked. Later he succeeded, at great personal risk, in stopping the fire of a British Tank, which, owing to some error, was directing its bullets and shells against our own troops at short range. By this very gallant action he undoubtedly saved many lives. A well-known resident in Newton paid the following tribute to his gallant memory: "He was a big, honest, open-hearted man, full of courage and manliness, and the deepest regret of every one in Newton is that he was not spared to come back to receive the enthusiastic welcome that awaited him."

PRIVATE JACK HARVEY, London Regiment.

It is somewhat remarkable that in this war of machinery men have been able to rival the knights errant of old, and to perform individual feats of daring and skill no less stirring than those which glorify the pages of romance. Private Jack Harvey, a Camberwell soldier, was a warrior of the type of Bertrand du Guesclin, whose deeds of "derring do" have given him a fame

that can never die. When Harvey's company was held up by intense machine-gun fire, he dashed forward, utterly regardless of his life, rushed a strongly-held post, shot two of the team, bayoneted another, and seized and destroyed the gun. All alone, he continued to work his way along the enemy's trench, and, stationing himself at the entrance to a dug-out, forced thirty-seven Germans to surrender. By these two acts of splendid gallantry he saved his company heavy casualties and enabled his comrades to proceed with their attack. Much of the success of the enterprise was due to the inspiring example of daring and devotion which he set to his fellows.

PRIVATE JAMES CRICHTON, Auckland Regiment, New Zealand Forces.

This "Admirable Crichton" spent his youth in the little Linlithgowshire village of Blackridge, near Bathgate, where he became a miner at twelve years of age. Later on he joined the Cameron Highlanders, and fought in South Africa. In 1914, when war broke out, he was in New Zealand. At once he offered his services, and after fighting in Gallipoli was transferred to France, where he held the rank of quartermaster at the base. Strongly desiring to get into the firing line, he threw up his "cushy" job, and rejoined the ranks as a private, though he was about forty years of age. When his battalion was advancing over country criss-crossed by canals and rivers, he received a painful wound in the foot, but refused to fall out. Later on a counter-attack forced his platoon back, and it was necessary that a message should be sent to battalion headquarters, which lay on the other side of a river and behind an area swept by rifle and machine-gun fire. Private Crichton volunteered to carry the message, and, plunging into the river, swam across amidst a hail of bullets. Happily he was not hit either in the water or when crossing the open ground. Having delivered his message, he recrossed the perilous area and rejoined his comrades. On the same day he saw that it was possible to save a bridge which had been mined by the enemy. Without waiting for orders, he pushed through a hot fire from machine guns and snipers, and, reaching the bridge, removed the charges and returned with the fuses and detonators. All this he did while suffering from a wound which greatly hampered his movements. His valour and devotion in these circumstances were beyond all praise.

Feeding the Front Line from the Air.

(By permission of The Illustrated London News.)

Frequently during the latter stages of the war men in the front line were cut off from their supplies by German barrages. In such cases aeroplanes came to the rescue and dropped boxes of ammunition by means of parachutes. So skilfully was this managed that frequently the boxes of cartridges were dropped into the trenches where they were needed.

Lieutenant-Colonel John Standish Surtees Prendergast Vereker, Viscount Gort, D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

The first peer to win the Victoria Cross in this war now figures in our record. Viscount Gort was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst, and passed into the army in 1905, three years after he succeeded to the title. Up to September 1918 he had won the D.S.O. and the M.C., besides being mentioned four times in dispatches. The premier distinction was awarded to him for conspicuous bravery, skilful leading, and devotion to duty during the attack of the Guards Division on September 27, 1918, across the Canal du Nord, near Flesquières. During this attack he was in command of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, the leading battalion of the 3rd Guards Brigade. Under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire he led his battalion forward with great skill and determination, and reached the "forming-up" ground, where his men were again subjected to very heavy gruelling from shells and bullets. Although wounded, he determined to carry on. Having directed a platoon to make a flanking attack along a sunken road, he went across open ground under a terrific fire to obtain assistance from a Tank, which he led to an advantageous position for crushing the enemy's machine-gun posts. While so engaged he was again severely wounded. He lost much blood, and was forced to lie on a stretcher for a time. Recovering a little, he got up and again took command. His example was most inspiring: his men were so full of admiration for his indomitable pluck that they flung themselves into the attack, with the result that they seized over two hundred prisoners, two batteries of field guns, and numerous machine guns. The viscount refused to leave his men until they had put the captured position into a condition of defence, and he had seen the "success" signal go up on the final objective.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.—III.

CAPTAIN CYRIL HUBERT FRISBY, Grenadier Guards.

Another hero of the Guards' attack on the Canal du Nord displayed similar courage, enterprise, and skill. Captain Frisby was in command of a company detailed to capture the canal crossing on the Demicourt-Graincourt road. When the leading platoon reached the canal, it came under fire from a strong machine-gun post established under the old iron bridge on the far side. So fierce was the fire that, in spite of reinforcements, the platoon could not proceed. Captain Frisby realized that unless the post was captured the whole advance in this area would fail. Calling for volunteers, he dashed forward with three comrades, scrambled down into the dry bed of the canal under terrible fire at point-blank range, climbed up the other side, and succeeded in capturing the post, two machine guns, and twelve men. The attacking companies were thus enabled to go forward and reach their objective. As soon as the new position was made defensible, the captain observed that a company on his right was in grave difficulty. It had lost all its officers and sergeants, and was about to be counter-attacked. At once he went to the rescue, and by his timely aid a very determined assault was beaten off. The gallant captain did not escape scathless. He received a bayonet wound in the leg, but made light of it, and "carried on," thus setting a splendid example to his men.

LANCE-CORPORAL THOMAS NORMAN JACKSON, 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

When Captain Frisby called for volunteers to cross the canal and rush the machine-gun post under the old iron bridge, Corporal Jackson was the first to respond to the call. Later in

the morning he was the first to jump into a German trench which his platoon was detailed to clear. While fighting valiantly he fell to rise no more. "Throughout the whole of the day on which he was killed this young N.C.O. showed the greatest valour and devotion to duty."

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM DONOVAN JOYNT, 8th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

During the attack on Herleville Wood, not far from Péronne, on August 23, 1918, Lieutenant Joynt took command when his captain fell, and led the company forward with courage and skill. On approaching Herleville Wood a terrible fire assailed the troops of the leading battalion which he was supporting, and the casualties were so heavy that the men were much shaken. At this critical moment Lieutenant Joynt rushed forward under very heavy fire, collected and reorganized the remnants of the battalion, and got them under cover, to await the arrival of his own company. He then crawled out on a scouting expedition, and discovered the whereabouts of the guns that were doing the mischief. Having located them, he called upon his men to follow him, and with levelled bayonets they dashed into the wood, and swept down upon the Germans so suddenly and with such determination that they fled. Later on, at Plateau Wood, he again led a party of volunteers against a stubbornly-held position. After much hand-to-hand fighting the garrison surrendered. His heroic work only ceased when he was badly wounded by a shell.

SERGEANT JOHN GILROY GRANT, 1st Battalion, Wellington Regiment, New Zealand Forces.

On September 1, 1918, when Sergeant Grant was in command of a platoon forming one of the leading waves which were attacking part of the high ground to the east of Baucourt, he discovered, on reaching the crest, that a line of five enemy machine-gun posts was blocking the way. Under point-blank fire the company advanced, and when about twenty yards from the posts, Sergeant Grant, closely followed by a comrade, rushed ahead of his platoon, and with great dash and bravery entered the centre post. His sudden appearance so demoralized the garrison that they were quickly "mopped up" by the men following him. This done, the sergeant rushed the post on the left, and the remainder of the strong points were quickly occupied and cleared. Throughout the whole operations on

How our Airmen hampered the Hun Retreat.

(*From the picture by Joseph Simpson. By permission of The Graphic.*)

"Bombers and low-fliers have flown far behind the front line to where trains, loaded with guns and stores, have packed the rails, and the roads have been congested with transport." Our illustration shows a night-flier attacking trains. By destroying an engine and trucks we blocked the line with wreckage.

this and the two previous days Sergeant Grant displayed the utmost coolness, determination, and valour.

Private Wilfrid Wood, 10th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers.

A hero of the Italian campaign must now engage our attention. On October 28, 1918, near Casa Van, a unit on the right flank was held up by the fire of enemy machine gunners and snipers. Private Wood, without waiting for orders, worked his way forward, and with his Lewis gun enfiladed a ditch occupied by the enemy. Three officers and 160 men were forced to surrender. The striking courage and enterprise of this gallant soldier in the face of intense rifle and machine-gun fire won the admiration of all his comrades.

Ressaldar Dadlu Singh, 14th Lancers, attached 29th Lancers, Indian Army.

Once more an Indian soldier's name appears in our record of outstanding heroism. You will remember that the forces with which Allenby struck his decisive blows in Palestine were mainly Indian. On the morning of September 23, 1918, our hero's squadron charged a strong position on the west bank of the river Jordan. On nearing the position his comrades fell fast and thick, and he discovered that the machine guns which were mowing them down were stationed on a little hill on the left front. The position was also held by 200 infantry. Without the slightest hesitation he collected six of his men and dashed forward, utterly regardless of his own life. So determined was his onset that the hill was captured, and the guns were put out of action. As he reached the top of the hill, and was in the act of seizing one of the guns, he fell with a mortal wound. He died in the hour of victory, for ere he breathed his last all the machine guns and infantry on the hill had surrendered. He literally died to save his comrades.

Major William George Barker, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C., R.A.F.

In these pages you have read many stories of our heroic airmen. I am now about to describe the exploits of an aviator who in a single day gave battle to sixty enemy machines and brought down four of them. Mr. Philip Gibbs, the war correspondent, tells us that Major Barker's feat was the talk of the army on the Western front, and that it was as wonderful as anything done by our knights errant of the air during the

war. Major Barker was a Canadian from New Brunswick, who had already won many decorations for his daring and prowess. He was awarded the Military Cross on January 10, 1917, and a bar was added to it on 18th July of the same year. On February 18, 1918, he received the Distinguished Service Order, and seven months later became entitled to wear a second bar to his Military Cross. In November 1918 a bar was added to his Distinguished Service Order. In addition, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Italian Cross of Honour.

The marvellous feat to which I have already referred was achieved over the Forest of Mormal, to the north-east of Le Cateau. You will remember that the Battle of Le Cateau was fought in the third week of October, in order to hold up our troops while the enemy got his transport away through the mazes of the wood. Over this dense forest, which has a queer kind of Eiffel Tower in the middle, the major was flying for the purpose of keeping in touch with our advancing troops, and giving battle to any German plane that might be sighted. As he searched the skies he perceived an enemy two-seater flying at a height of 21,000 feet, in order to be out of range of our "Archies." Climbing rapidly in a wide spiral, the major got within reach of the enemy plane and opened fire. The German machine broke, and the pilot and observer fell, while a third man dropped in a parachute. At this moment a Fokker biplane came into view. Our hero heard the whistling of bullets through his plane, and being hit in the left thigh, was for a moment stunned. His machine, now out of control, began to spin downwards; but he recovered consciousness, and by means of his levers steadied it. Then he saw that he was surrounded by a large formation of Fokkers, all manœuvring about him. By superb skill he foiled them, and, one by one, three of the enemy machines fell. All the time machine guns were rattling and bullets were hissing about him. Again he was hit, and his left thigh bone was shattered. He fainted, and his machine dived helplessly towards the ground. Once more, however, he recovered, and again getting his machine under control, prepared to continue the fight. From twelve to fifteen enemy aeroplanes now dashed at him. Singling out one of them, he flew towards it with a burst of fire, and saw it descend in flames. The enemy's bullets were buzzing about him like wasps, and

Stock Force, herself in a sinking condition, destroying a German Submarine.

(*By permission of The Sphere.*)

one of them smashed his left elbow, so that his arm dropped helpless by his side. Nevertheless, with his right arm he managed to steer his machine and fire his gun at the new swarm of enemies. He dived steeply to escape them, but was met by another formation of aeroplanes, which attacked him and endeavoured to cut him off. Unable to avoid them, he determined to fight them, and with marvellous skill twisted and turned, dived and looped in order to get into an advantageous position. For ten or twelve minutes he practised every "stunt" known to him, and during this time put two of the enemy machines out of action and broke up the formation. The rest flew off, and the indomitable major descended. Comrades ran to his rescue, and found him crumpled up, with his head drooping on his breast. He was carried to hospital, with the proud knowledge that he had fought beween fifty and sixty hostile aircraft, and had not only escaped, but had destroyed four of them and had brought down three others in flames. During the war he had accounted for no fewer than fifty enemy machines. You are, I am sure, filled with admiration for the unconquerable spirit of this hero. With thigh and arm shattered, twice fainting from wounds, he nevertheless maintained the terribly unequal contest, and in the end emerged as victor.

CAPTAIN ANDREW WEATHERBY BEAUCHAMP-PROCTOR, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C.

Captain Beauchamp-Proctor had a long and most successful career in the air. During the two months between August 8 and October 8, 1918, he was victor in twenty-six decisive combats. He also succeeded in destroying twelve enemy kite balloons and ten enemy aircraft. In addition, he drove down four other hostile machines completely out of control. During the first eight days of October he had a most adventurous time. On 1st October he took part in a general engagement with twenty-eight machines, and crashed two of them. Next day he burned a hostile balloon, and on the following day not only repeated this exploit, but drove down an enemy scout. On the 5th he scored his third success against the German observation balloons; and on the 8th, after destroying a two-seater, was wounded during his homeward flight. Nevertheless, he continued to control his machine, and was able to make a safe landing. During the war he overcame fifty-four foes, destroyed twenty-two enemy machines and sixteen balloons, and drove

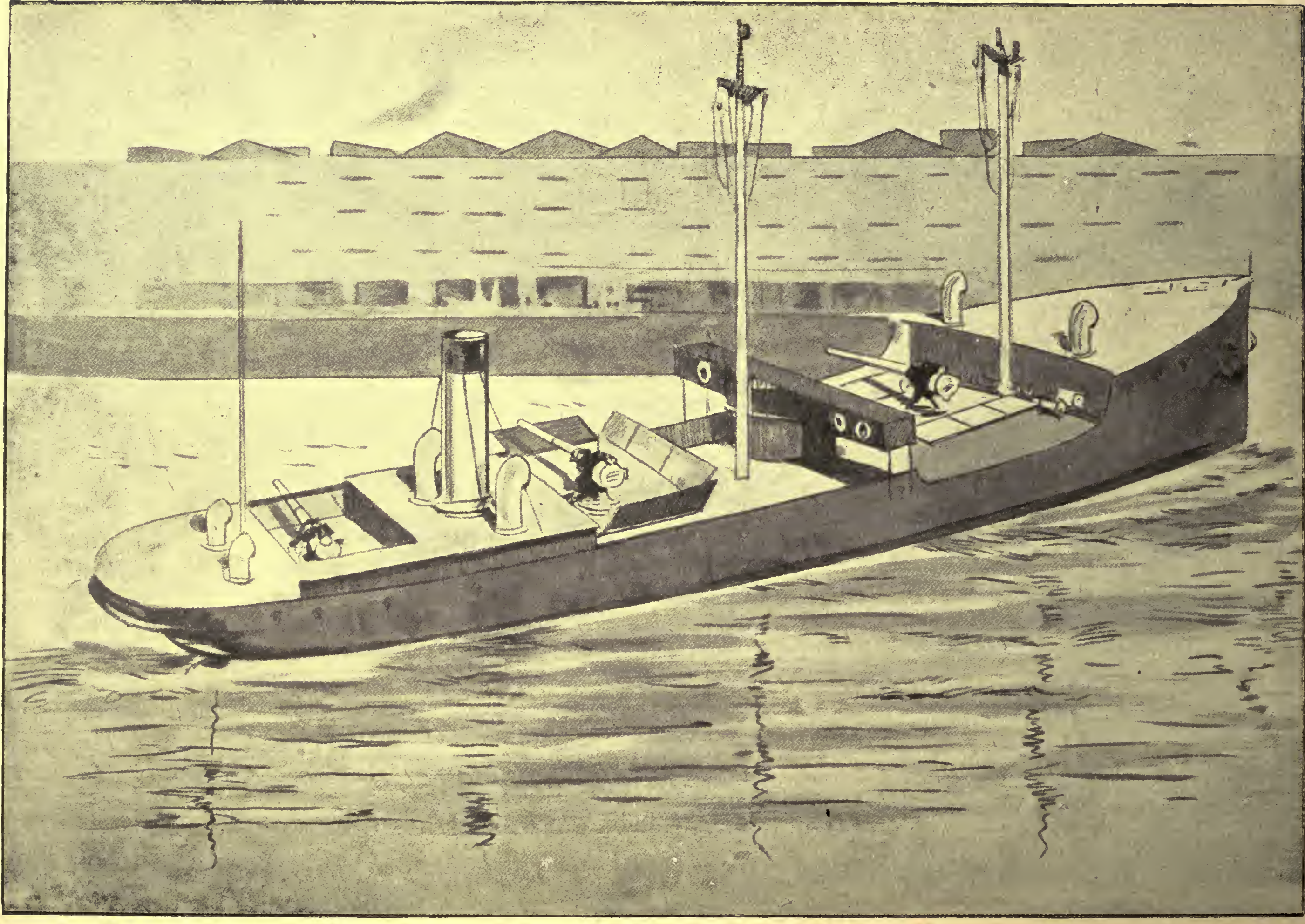


Diagram to illustrate the position of the Guns on a Q Boat.

(*By permission of The Sphere.*)

down sixteen aircraft out of control. Between 21st March and 8th August he rendered brilliant service in attacking enemy troops and scouting far ahead of our lines. The official record tells us that his comrades can never forget the wonderful daring and skill which he exhibited.

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During the course of this work I have mentioned several naval officers who were awarded the Victoria Cross for deeds which were not revealed at the time because the accounts might give information to the enemy. Late in November, when the armistice had been signed, we were told that these gallant seamen had been in command of " mystery ships," or Q boats —that is, vessels disguised as innocent traders, and acting as " decoy ducks " for submarines. Lieutenant-Commander Gordon Campbell (page 167, Vol. VII.), Lieutenant William Edward Sanders (page 333, Vol. VII.), Lieutenant Ronald Neil Stuart (page 383, Vol. VII.), Lieutenant Charles George Bonner (page 127, Vol. VIII.), P.O. Ernest Pilcher (page 132, Vol. VIII.), all won the premier decoration for heroic conduct in ships of this character. Perhaps I shall give you the best idea of a " mystery ship " if I describe the *Suffolk Coast*, which was on view in the Thames in December 1918. Even standing on her deck, an experienced seaman would have thought her an ordinary tramp. She carried the papers of a coasting collier, and her crew were dressed in the rough clothes likely to be worn by men navigating such a vessel. Looking around him, our experienced seaman would have seen many familiar things which were by no means what they appeared to be. For example, the air-shaft was a periscope, an innocent-looking coil of rope was a look-out post, and the deck-houses were merely covers for hidden guns. By pressing a lever they fell away as if by magic, and revealed heavy artillery. Now let me tell you the story of

LIEUTENANT HAROLD AUTEN, D.S.C., R.N.R.

Lieutenant Auten was in command of H.M.S. *Stock Force*, a collier transformed at Queenstown into one of the most deceptive ships that ever encountered a U-boat. She was armed to the teeth with a pair of 4-inch guns, and a 12-pounder hidden under her fore-hatch. She cruised about the seas at a steady eight knots an hour, and seemed to be " simply asking to be torpedoed," while all the time she was " aching to slam shells " into her attackers.

One dark, rainy, blustery night, when she was loafing to the southward of the Lizard, the men on the lookout saw a torpedo whizzing towards them. Happily there was no explosion; probably the deadly weapon had passed right under the ship. "I simply itched," says Lieutenant Auten, "to give the order to open fire, but the target wasn't good enough. We let down the screens, which in the daytime hide the guns; and their crews loaded the weapons and closed them up again, ready to open fire at the word. But Fritz vanished, and we resumed night watches. The U-boat, however, was following us, and just about four o'clock in the morning a second torpedo came slashing towards us. Jumping to the telegraph, I put the engines astern, and we just managed to avoid the missile. Again the gun crews raced along the covered passages to their stations, praying for the dawn to come quickly, so that we might get at least a pot-shot at the Hun. When the dawn came we saw, like a gray ghost a long distance away, the figure of the U-boat. She dashed towards us at a tremendous rate, while our gun crews spat on their hands and prepared to repay themselves for the anxious night they had just passed through. Then the submarine slewed to bring her bow tubes to bear, and presently the track of a third torpedo could be seen heading direct for us. I thought that time it was a certain hitter; but when about three hundred feet from the Hun the 'tinfish' seemed to slew suddenly in its tracks, and headed back towards the boat which had fired it.

"The Hun was now within range, so I decided that I would open fire. Scarcely had the shutters crashed to the deck and the first shells started on their way towards the target, when there was a thunderous explosion. The Hun's own torpedo had hit him amidships, and had finished him off! Thus ended the dreariest, most nerve-racking night I have ever experienced."

On July 30, 1918, at 5 p.m., a torpedo struck the ship, entirely wrecking the bridge and fore part, and wounding three of the crew. The vessel settled down to a depth of three feet, and a "panic party" immediately abandoned ship. The wounded were removed to the lower deck, where the surgeon, working up to his waist in water, attended to their injuries. The lieutenant, two guns' crews, and the engine-room staff remained at their posts. The submarine then came to the sur-

face half a mile ahead of the ship, and remained there a quarter of an hour. The "panic party" in the boat now began to row back towards the ship, so as to decoy the submarine within range of the hidden guns. She fell into the trap, and passed slowly down the port side of *Stock Force* about three hundred yards away. Lieutenant Auten, however, withheld his fire until she was abeam and both his guns could bear. At 5.40 p.m., after what seemed an eternity of waiting, the lieutenant gave the order, "Stand by! Let go!" Down went the shutters, the guns stood unmasked, and *Stock Force* opened fire. Her first shot carried away one of the periscopes of the submarine; the second hit the conning tower, smashed it to atoms, and blew the occupant high into the air; the third struck the submarine on the water-line, tearing her open, and blowing out a number of the crew. The vessel sank several feet, and her bows rose. Smoke and blue flame issued from the rents in her hull. Shell after shell hit her, and at length she sank by the stern.

By this time Lieutenant Auten's vessel was doomed. Her bows had been blown away, and she was only kept afloat by the devoted labour of her crew. During the whole of the action one man remained pinned down under the foremost gun, which had been wrecked by the explosion of the torpedo. He remained there cheerfully and without complaint until the end of the action, although the vessel seemed to be sinking under him. At 9.25 p.m. the vessel went down with her colours flying, and the officers and crew were taken off by two torpedo boats and a trawler. A fortnight later the crew were on board the *Suffolk Coast*, "carrying on" as usual.

The above accounts give you an excellent idea of the splendid work done by the Q boats. I wish I had space in which to tell you some of the many stirring stories of their adventures. Some day one of the most fascinating books ever written will record their duels with the jackals of the sea.

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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM HEW CLARK-KENNEDY, C.M.G., D.S.O., 24th Battalion, Quebec Regiment.

On 27th August Colonel Clark-Kennedy led his battalion, under very heavy shell and machine-gun fire, from trenches in front of Wancourt to the attack on the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. Many of his leading files fell, and advance was checked, and the

men became disorganized under the withering fire. Colonel Clark-Kennedy was equal to the occasion. He led his men forward, made straight for the machine guns, collected men who had lost their leaders, and by his most gallant and inspiring example enabled the whole brigade front to move forward. In the afternoon, by dint of splendid determination and very skilful leadership, his battalion captured a village, crossed the Sensee river, and occupied a trench in front of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. Then, under terrible fire, he went to and fro encouraging his men to hold on. Next day, though severely wounded, he dragged himself from shell-hole to shell-hole, and directed his troops in a further attack. When his exhausted men could go no further, he established a strong line of defence. Though in great pain, he bore his sufferings for five long hours, until he was assured that reinforcements could reach his position. It is impossible to overestimate the results achieved by the valour and leadership of this most gallant officer.

Lieutenant-Colonel Daniel Burges, D.S.O., commanding 7th Battalion, South Wales Borderers.

The scene now shifts to the Balkans. During operations on September 18, 1918, Colonel Burges went out and examined the Bulgar front-line trenches so closely that he was enabled to bring his battalion to the assembly point without loss. Then, though every landmark was obscured by smoke and dust, he led his men in exactly the right direction. While still some distance from its objective, the battalion came under fierce machine-gun fire, and lost many of its company leaders. Though the colonel was wounded, he continued to direct his men and to encourage them. Finally, he led a dash on the enemy's positions through a terrible fire, and, after being hit twice, fell unconscious. His coolness and courage so inspired his men that they carried an almost impregnable position.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Vann, M.C., attached 1/6th Battalion, Notts and Derby Regiment.

On September 29, 1918, Colonel Vann led his battalion with great skill across the Canal du Nord, in spite of a very thick fog and heavy fire from field and machine guns. On reaching the high ground above Bellenglise, the whole attack was held up by intense fire from the front and right flank of the enemy. Realizing that everything depended on the advance going forward with the barrage, Colonel Vann ran to the firing

line, and with the greatest gallantry led his men onward. By his prompt action and utter disregard of his own safety he changed the whole situation. With a cheer the line swept forward. Later on he rushed a field gun single-handed, and knocked out three of the crew serving it. The success of the day was mainly due to his splendid gallantry and skill. Unhappily he was killed near Ramicourt on October 3, 1918, while leading his battalion in attack.

Captain Bellenden Seymour Hutcheson, Canadian Army Medical Corps, attached 1st Central Ontario Regiment.

After a long interval a doctor appears in our record—the first Canadian doctor to win the premier decoration. You have not forgotten September 2, 1918, when the Canadians burst through the Quéant-Drocourt line. Captain Hutcheson accompanied his battalion on that day, and in the most self-denying and fearless fashion remained on the field until every wounded man had received attention. He dressed the wounds of a badly-stricken officer under terrible fire, and, with the assistance of prisoners and of his own men, brought his patient into safety, though some of the bearer party fell. Immediately afterwards he rushed forward in full view of the enemy, and amidst a hail of bullets, to tend a wounded sergeant. Dragging the man into a shell-hole, he dressed his wounds. Again and again on that red day he performed similar deeds of mercy at the greatest possible risk. Scores of men owed their lives to him.

Lieutenant David Stuart M'Gregor, 6th Battalion Royal Scots and 29th Battalion M.G. Corps.

Lieutenant M'Gregor was in command of a section of machine guns on October 22, 1918, near Hoogmolen. As the troops to which he was attached went forward they were met with intense enfilade fire from Hill 66 on their right flank. The lieutenant, in the most fearless fashion, went forward and discovered the whereabouts of the guns that were doing the mischief. The six hundred yards between him and them were devoid of cover, and were literally swept by fire. Only by sacrificing himself could he get his guns across that death zone. Mounting a limber, he ordered the driver to gallop across the open. The horses tore forward, and as they did so a storm of bullets was directed against them. Driver, horses, and limber, all were hit; but the lieutenant got through, established his

guns in a bit of cover, and opened fire so effectively that our advance was resumed. For an hour and a half he worked his guns in this exposed position, and then fell dead. His great gallantry and supreme devotion to duty have rarely been equalled in the history of the war. He was but twenty-five when he died. Prior to the war he was a banking apprentice in Edinburgh, and was renowned as a golfer, footballer, and swimmer.

LIEUTENANT JOHN CRIDLAN BARRETT, 1/5th Battalion, Leicester Regiment.

On September 24, 1918, during our attack on Pontruet, a considerable number of our men lost direction owing to the darkness and the smoke barrage, and Lieutenant Barrett found himself advancing towards a trench of great strength, containing numerous machine guns. At once he collected all available men and charged the nearest group of guns. He was wounded on the way; but pushed on, gained the trench, captured the guns, and laid many of the enemy low. Again he was severely wounded, but would not retire. He climbed out of the trench and took stock of the position, and then fell exhausted from loss of blood. Nevertheless, he was able to give such detailed orders to his men that they were able to cut their way back to their battalion. Though suffering greatly, he refused all help, and shortly afterwards was wounded again. He was now unable to move, and had to be carried to the rear. His magnificent spirit and doggedness were truly British, and his comrades owed their escape almost entirely to his coolness and skill.

LIEUTENANT GRAHAM THOMSON LYALL, 102nd Battalion, 2nd Central Ontario Regiment.

On September 27, 1918, while leading his platoon against Bourlon Wood, Lieutenant Lyall rendered invaluable assistance to the leading company, which was held up by an enemy strong-point. By means of a flank movement he captured the position, together with thirteen prisoners, one field gun, and four machine guns. Later on, at the southern end of the wood, his platoon, now much weakened, was checked in the usual way. Collecting some men, he rushed the nest of guns single-handed, killed the officer in charge, and bagged forty-five prisoners and five machine guns. Before he reached his final objective he captured forty-seven other prisoners. On 1st October, when in command of a weak company, he so skilfully disposed his men

that eighty prisoners and seventeen machine guns fell into his hands. Thus in two days he captured three officers, 182 men, twenty-six machine guns, and one field gun. Throughout the operations he showed the utmost valour and high powers of command.

LIEUTENANT EDGAR THOMAS TOWNER, M.C., 2nd Battalion, Australian M.G. Corps.

Four Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians who played a heroic part in the capture of Mont St. Quentin, the hill which overlooks and commands Péronne. The position was terribly strong, and its fall came as a great surprise to Headquarters. A staff officer who visited it soon after its capture could not understand how it had been taken. Nothing could stand against the fearless valour of such men as Towner, Lowerson, Hall, and Maetier.

On September 1, 1918, Lieutenant Towner, who was in charge of four Vickers guns, discovered the whereabouts of an enemy machine gun which was causing casualties in our ranks. He seized it single-handed, and turned it on the Germans, thereby inflicting severe losses upon them. Later on, by skilfully disposing his forces, he captured twenty-five prisoners; and by his energy, promptness, and foresight gave great assistance to the advancing infantry. When he ran short of ammunition he secured an enemy machine gun, which he mounted and fired in full view of the enemy. This sudden onset forced the Germans to draw back, whereupon our men advanced. He continued to fire, even though wounded, and at a very critical period did yeoman service. On the following night, when a small detached post was under heavy fire, he steadied the men by his coolness and cheerfulness, and gave them the confidence to hold out. All night long he kept close watch on the enemy, and though wounded, did not cease his labours until he fell exhausted. For thirty hours he had been the soul of the defence.

LIEUTENANT ROBERT VAUGHAN GORLE, "A" BATTERY, 50th Brigade, R.F.A.

During the attack on Ledeghem, October 1, 1918, Lieutenant Gorle was in command of an 18-pounder gun which was working in close conjunction with infantry. He brought his gun into action in the most exposed positions on four several occasions, and at a range of five or six hundred yards knocked out a number of enemy machine guns. Later, seeing that the

infantry were being driven back by hostile fire, he galloped his gun in front of the leading files, and twice destroyed the machine guns that were mowing down our men. His splendid dash and devotion so inspired the wavering troops that they rallied, and retook the northern end of the village.

LIEUTENANT DONALD JOHN DEAN, 8th Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment.

During the period September 24 to 26, 1918, Lieutenant Dean's platoon was holding a newly-captured enemy trench north-west of Lens. The left flank of the position was insecure, and the trench itself was ill prepared for defence. While it was in this condition the enemy attempted to recapture it. The attack failed, but our men had to work with pick and spade under very heavy fire. Shortly after midnight the enemy advanced again, but was again driven off. Through the night Lieutenant Dean and his platoon laboured unceasingly, and about 6 a.m. on 25th September the enemy once more advanced, supported by heavy shell and trench-mortar fire. A third and a fourth time Lieutenant Dean's little command succeeded in repulsing the Germans, and inflicting heavy loss on them. Throughout the 25th and the following night the men strove with all their might to make their position secure. On the morning of the 26th the enemy advanced for the fifth time against the stubborn little post. The same fate befell him: he was driven back with heavy loss. Throughout this long and terrible ordeal Lieutenant Dean's dogged spirit was reflected in his men. His example inspired them to make a defence that ought to find a place in history.

CHAPTER XXV.

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS.—IV.

LIEUTENANT LAWRENCE DOMINIC M'CARTHY, 16th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

On the morning of August 23, 1918, we attacked near Madame Wood, to the north of Chaulnes. The 16th Battalion reached its objective without serious opposition; but the battalion on the left flank was heavily attacked by well-posted machine guns. Lieutenant M'Carthy at once engaged the nearest post with rifle-fire, but without success. Leaving his men to maintain the fire, he and two others dashed across the open towards the guns. Outdistancing his companions, he sprang into the enemy trench and seized the gun. Then, all alone, he fought his way down the trench and captured three more guns. When he was 700 yards from his starting-point he was joined by one of his men, and together they bombed their way onward until they gained touch with an adjoining unit. During this most daring advance Lieutenant M'Carthy without assistance killed twenty of the enemy, captured five machine guns, and took fifty prisoners. His extraordinary gallantry saved a critical situation, and enabled the final objective to be taken.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT FRANK EDWARD YOUNG, 1st Battalion, Hertfordshire Regiment.

On September 18, 1918, to the south-east of Havrincourt, Lieutenant Young was in command of several detached posts which were about to be counter-attacked by the enemy. He went from post to post despite the terribly heavy barrage, and, warning the men that the enemy would soon be upon them, encouraged them to resist to the end. In the early stages of the attack he rescued two of his men who had been captured,

and bombed and silenced an enemy machine gun. Though surrounded, he fought his way back to the main barricade, and drove out a party of the enemy. During four hours of hard hand-to-hand fighting he displayed the utmost valour and devotion, and maintained a line the loss of which would have caused serious delay to future operations. When last seen, he was fighting like a lion in the midst of overwhelming numbers of the enemy.

COMPANY SERGEANT-MAJOR JOHN HENRY WILLIAMS, D.C.M., M.M., 10th Battalion, South Wales Borderers.

This gallant sergeant performed his crowning feat of valour during the night of October 7–8, 1918, when the enemy was attacking Villers Outreaux. Observing that his company was suffering heavily from an enemy machine gun, he ordered a Lewis gun to engage it, and crawled forward all alone, under heavy fire, to the flank of the hostile post, which he rushed. Fifteen of the enemy held up their hands, but, realizing that the sergeant was alone, turned on him. One of them seized his rifle ; but he managed to break away, and, after bayoneting five of his assailants, drove the remainder before him as prisoners. By this gallant deed our hero enabled his own company and the flanking companies to push forward.

SERGEANT WILLIAM HENRY JOHNSON, 1/5th Battalion, Notts and Derby Regiment.

Sergeant Johnson's platoon was held up at Remicourt on October 3, 1918, by a nest of machine guns, which were firing at very close range. All alone he worked his way forward, despite a rain of bombs and bullets, charged the post, bayoneted several gunners, and captured two of the weapons. During this attack he was severely wounded by a bomb, but continued to lead his men forward. Shortly afterwards the line was once more held up by machine guns. Again he rushed forward, and with wonderful courage bombed the garrison, put the guns out of action, and captured the crews.

SERGEANT WILLIAM M'NALLY, M.M., 8th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment.

You have not forgotten the crossing of the Piave by Lord Cavan's Anglo-Italian Tenth Army on October 25, 1918. Two days after our men had established themselves on the other side the advance was seriously hampered by heavy machine-gun fire from the neighbourhood of some buildings on a flank.

A Bridge with Human Piers: British Troops crossing a Stream.
(*From the picture by H. W. Koekkoek. By permission of The Illustrated London News.*)

Sergeant M'Nally, utterly regardless of self, rushed the post single-handed, killed the team, and captured the gun. Later, at Vazzola, on October 28, 1918, when his company had crossed the Monticano river, another strong point was encountered. Directing his platoon to engage it with rifle-fire, he crept to the rear of the position and rushed it, killing or putting to flight the garrison, and capturing a machine gun. On the same day, while holding a newly captured ditch, he was strongly counter-attacked from both flanks. By his coolness and skill in controlling the fire of his party he beat off the Austrians, and inflicted heavy loss upon them. In all these operations the sergeant proved himself a born leader and a soldier of the highest valour and resource.

Sergeant Albert David Lowerson, 21st Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

On page 239 I told you how Lieutenant Towner fought at Mont St. Quentin, near Péronne. Another hero of that encounter must now engage our attention. The enemy strove hard to retain his hold of the commanding hill, and every foot of the ground had to be won by the hardest fighting. Conspicuous in the attack was Sergeant Lowerson, who moved about fearlessly, directing his men, encouraging them to still greater effort, and finally leading them on to their objective. Arrived there, he saw that the left of the attacking party was held up by an enemy strong point, manned with twelve machine guns. Under the heaviest fire, he rallied seven men as a storming party; and while they attacked the flanks, he rushed ahead and with bombs reduced the post. He captured the whole of the guns and thirty prisoners. Though severely wounded in the right thigh, he refused to leave the front line until the prisoners had been sent to the rear and the post had been made thoroughly defensible. Throughout a week of fierce struggle his leadership and example were most distinguished.

Sergeant Gerald Sexton, 13th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

During our attack near Le Verguier, to the north-west of St. Quentin, on September 18, 1918, another gallant Australian covered himself with glory. During the whole period of the advance he was always to the fore, dealing with enemy machine guns, rushing enemy posts, and performing great feats of valour and endurance one after another. When the advance

had passed the ridge at Le Verguier, he noticed a party of the enemy lining a bank, and also a field gun that was holding up a company. Calling to his section to follow him, he rushed the gun and killed the gunners. Then he turned his attention to the bank, and after firing down some dug-outs, induced about thirty of the enemy to surrender. When the advance was continued, the company was again held up by machine guns on the flanks. Supported by another platoon, he made an end of the hostile weapons, and later in the day captured other posts and a further batch of machine guns. His wonderful dash and resource won him the admiration of every beholder.

Corporal Harry Blanshard Wood, M.M., 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards.

Our attack on the village of St. Python (October 13, 1918) was desperately opposed by machine guns, which raked the streets with deadly fire. When his platoon sergeant was killed, our hero took command. His task was to clear the western side of the village and secure the crossing of the river Selle. In front of a ruined bridge which had to be captured, enemy snipers were keeping up a fierce fire. The corporal detached a large brick from a house, and, carrying it out into the open space, lay down behind it, and fired continually at the snipers while his men pushed forward. He did not cease firing until the whole of his party had reached and captured the crossing. Throughout the day he was utterly careless of his own safety, and full of resource in devising means to overcome the enemy's resistance. Though repeatedly counter-attacked, he beat off every assault, and the success of the day's operations was largely due to his energy and devotion.

Corporal Thomas Neeley, M.M., 8th Battalion, Royal Lancaster Regiment.

During operations at Flesquières on September 27, 1918, Corporal Neeley's company was held up by heavy machine-gun fire from a flank, and the situation was serious. Corporal Neeley saw that desperate measures were needed, so he dashed out with two men, rushed the position, disposed of the garrison, and captured three machine guns. Later, on two successive occasions, he carried concrete strong points and killed or captured the occupants. Thanks to his splendid success in reducing these posts, he enabled his company to advance 3,000 yards along the Hindenburg support line.

Corporal Louis M'Guffie, 1/5th Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers.

During the advance on Piccadilly Farm, near Wytschaete, on September 25, 1918, Corporal M'Guffie, without a comrade, entered several enemy dug-outs and took many prisoners. He repeated this exploit during subsequent operations, and forced one officer and twenty-five men to surrender. While our troops were engaged in making a newly-captured position defensible, M'Guffie noticed that some of the prisoners were escaping. He pursued several of them, and brought them back. While so engaged, he rescued a number of British soldiers who had fallen into the enemy's hands. Later in the day he commanded a platoon with great dash and skill, and again captured many prisoners. Unhappily, this very gallant soldier was killed by a shell.

Corporal Arthur Charles Hall, 54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

During the operations at Péronne on September 1–2, 1918, Corporal Hall showed great courage, brilliant leadership, and high devotion to duty. During the attack on 1st September he rushed a machine-gun post, shot four of the garrison, and captured nine prisoners and two guns. Later he covered and supported the advance of the main party, discovered the whereabouts of enemy strong points, and led groups of men to the assault. In this way he captured many prisoners and machine guns. On the morning of 2nd September he carried a dangerously wounded comrade through a heavy barrage, and having handed him over to the doctors, returned to his post and "carried on" as usual. The success of the operations was mainly due to his splendid courage and energy.

Private Alexander Henry Buckley, 54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

Private Buckley also distinguished himself at Péronne on the same occasions. After the first objective had been passed, his half-company and part of the company on the flank were held up by an enemy machine-gun nest. With one comrade he rushed the post, shot four of the occupants, and took twenty-two prisoners. Later he reached a moat, and found that the only available footbridge was commanded by a group of machine guns. While attempting to cross the bridge and rush the guns he was killed. Throughout the advance this most gallant soldier

showed great enterprise, resource, and courage, and set a fine example of self-sacrificing devotion.

CORPORAL GEORGE ONIONS, 1st Battalion, Devonshire Regiment.

At Achiet-le-Petit, on August 22, 1918, Corporal Onions was sent out with one man to get into touch with the battalion on the right flank. While engaged in this task he observed the enemy advancing in great strength to counter-attack the positions which we had won on the previous day. At once he and his comrade took station on the flank of the advancing enemy, and opened rapid fire. So effective was his attack that, when the enemy was about one hundred yards from him, the line wavered, and men were seen throwing up their hands. Dashing forward along with his comrade, the gallant corporal took about two hundred Germans prisoners and marched them to the rear. By his magnificent courage and presence of mind he had brought a dangerous enemy advance to a standstill, and had saved our line from what might have been a disaster.

PRIVATE FRANK LESTER, 10th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers.

Private Lester was one of a party of about seven men detailed to clear the village of Neuvilly on October 12, 1918. Finding a house occupied by Germans, he entered by the back door, and shot down two of the enemy as they attempted to escape by the front door. A minute later a fall of masonry blocked the door by which he and his party had entered the house. The only exit into the street was under fire at point-blank range, and the street itself was swept by machine guns. Observing that an enemy sniper in a house across the street was shooting many of our men, Private Lester exclaimed, "I'll settle him!" and, dashing into the street, shot the sniper at close quarters. At the same instant he fell mortally wounded. He knew that certain death awaited him if he went into the street; but he also knew that his comrades in the opposite house would be shot down one by one if the sniper was not removed. Without a moment's hesitation he gave his life for his fellows. Peace to the ashes of this devoted hero.

PRIVATE HENRY TANDEY, D.C.M., M.M., 5th Battalion, West Riding Regiment.

While our troops were advancing on Marcoing, Private Tandey's platoon was held up by machine-gun fire. At once he crawled forward, sighted the gun, and, with the help of

a Lewis-gun team, knocked it out. When he reached the crossings of the river he discovered that the plank bridge had been destroyed. Under a hail of bullets he repaired the bridge, and thus enabled our troops to cross at this vital spot. Later in the evening he and eight comrades found themselves surrounded by an overwhelming number of Germans. Escape seemed hopeless, but at the critical moment Private Tandey led a bayonet charge with such spirit and determination that thirty-seven of the enemy were driven into the hands of the remainder of his company. Although twice wounded during these operations, he refused to leave his unit until the fight was won.

PRIVATE ROBERT MACTIER, 23rd Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

You have already read of three Australians who won the Victoria Cross at Mont St. Quentin. Now for the story of a fourth. Before Private Mactier's battalion could advance it was necessary to clear up several enemy strong points close to our line. Bombing parties were sent out for the purpose, but they failed to dislodge the enemy. Then the gallant private, in full daylight, jumped out of the trench, rushed into a machine-gun post, killed the garrison of eight men with his revolver and bombs, and threw the gun over the parapet. Rushing forward about twenty yards, he jumped into another post; whereupon the six gunners held up their hands. This done, he assaulted and carried a third enemy machine gun, but almost immediately fell a victim to shots from another post. His magnificent heroism enabled his comrades to move forward and capture the village of Mont St. Quentin a few hours later.

PRIVATE JOHN FRANCIS YOUNG, 87th Battalion, Quebec Regiment.

A heroic stretcher-bearer now joins the glorious band of the supremely brave. During an attack on September 2, 1918, his company, in advancing over a ridge, suffered many casualties. Although there was no cover, Private Young went out across the open fire-swept ground and tended the wounded. When his stock of dressings was exhausted, he went back to headquarters several times through heavy fire and returned with a further supply. For over an hour he continued his merciful work amidst bursting shells and whizzing bullets, and was the means of saving many lives.

PRIVATE WALTER LEIGH RAYFIELD, 7th Battalion, British Columbia Regiment.

During the operations east of Arras, from 2nd to 4th September 1918, Private Rayfield ran ahead of his company and rushed a trench occupied by a large party of the enemy, two of whom he bayoneted, and ten of whom he made prisoners. Later, he discovered the whereabouts of an enemy sniper who was picking off many of our men. He rushed the section of the trench from which the sniper was firing, and his sudden appearance so demoralized the enemy that thirty of them surrendered. His crowning feat was to go out under heavy machine-gun fire and bring into safety a wounded comrade.

PRIVATE ROBERT MATTHEW BEATHAM, 8th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

During the attack on a village east of Amiens (August 9, 1918), Private Beatham, with one comrade, bombed and fought the crews of four machine guns which were holding up our advance. He killed ten of the enemy, captured ten others, and thus cleared the way for our troops to go forward. Though wounded he "carried on," and when the final objective was reached, again dashed forward and bombed a machine gun. While so engaged he fell, riddled with bullets. His valour so inspired his comrades that they fought with wonderful courage and carried their objective.

PRIVATE GEORGE CARTWRIGHT, 53rd Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

On the morning of August 31, 1918, during an attack on a wood near Péronne, two companies were held up by machine-gun fire from the south-western edge of the wood. At once Private Cartwright began to stalk the gun in the most deliberate manner, though under intense fire. He shot three of the team, bombed the post, captured the gun, and took nine prisoners. This gallant deed had a most inspiring effect: the whole line immediately rushed forward victoriously.

PRIVATE WILLIAM MATTHEW CURREY, 53rd Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

During the attack on Péronne (September 1, 1918) a field gun at close range was working havoc amongst our troops. Private Currey, under the fierce fire of machine-guns, rushed the weapon, killed the entire crew, and captured the weapon. Later he stormed a machine-gun post, and by doing so cleared

away a dangerous obstacle. Finally, he volunteered to carry orders for the withdrawal of an isolated company, and this he succeeded in doing despite terrible shell and rifle fire. He returned safe with valuable information.

PRIVATE CLAUDE JOSEPH PATRICK NUNNEY, D.C.M., M.M., 38th Battalion, Eastern Ontario Regiment.

Private Nunney won his Victoria Cross for heroic conduct during the Canadian attack on the Switch line (September 2, 1918). On the previous day the enemy laid down a heavy barrage and counter-attacked. Private Nunney, who at the time was stationed at company headquarters, ran off without waiting for orders, and, passing through the barrage, went from post to post encouraging the men to "stick it." Thanks largely to his fine, fearless example, the attack was repulsed and our line was saved. On 2nd September he was again to the fore, and was frequently seen far ahead of his comrades cheering them on. Finally he fell severely wounded.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HARRY GREENWOOD, D.S.O., M.C., 9th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

Twice on October 23, 1918, did this gallant officer rush machine-gun posts. When he reached his last objective he beat off a determined attack, during which he captured 150 prisoners, eight machine guns, and one field gun. On 24th October he again showed the greatest gallantry, and by bold and skilful handling of his battalion secured the flank of his brigade and division. "His valour and leading during two days of fighting were beyond all praise."

MAJOR BLAIR ANDERSON WARK, D.S.O., 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

From September 29 to October 1, 1918, during operations against the Hindenburg Line and in the subsequent advance, Major Blair displayed remarkable enterprise and skill. On 29th September, while leading his men in an assault, he rushed a battery of field guns, and captured four of them. On 1st October he distinguished himself by dashing forward and silencing machine guns which were causing heavy casualties in our ranks.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT JAMES JOHNSON, 2nd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, attached 36th Battalion.

On October 14, 1918, this officer held back the enemy for six hours, and repelled frequent counter-attacks. When at last he was ordered to retire he was the last man to leave the ad-

vanced position. He carried with him a wounded man, and three times subsequently brought in stricken soldiers under intense machine-gun fire.

SECOND-LIEUTENANT JAMES PALMER HUFFAM, 5th Battalion, West Riding Regiment, attached 2nd Battalion.

Throughout the fighting from August 29 to September 1, 1918, Lieutenant Huffam showed the utmost gallantry. With three men he rushed an enemy machine-gun post, and when his little command was forced to retire, carried a wounded comrade out of the fight. On the night of 31st August he enabled the advance to continue by capturing another gun, along with eight prisoners.

SERGEANT JOHN O'NEILL, M.M., 2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment.

On 14th October he charged an enemy field battery at the head of eleven men, and captured four of the guns, two machine guns, and sixteen prisoners. Again, on the morning of 20th October, with the assistance of one man, he rushed an enemy machine-gun position, routed 100 of the garrison, and caused many casualties.

CORPORAL ROLAND EDWARD ELCOCK, M.M., 11th Battalion, Royal Scots.

On October 15, 1918, when in charge of a Lewis-gun team, he went forward, without waiting for orders, to within ten yards of two enemy machine guns. He put both of them out of action, and captured five prisoners. Later, near the Lys river, he attacked and captured another gun.

CORPORAL LAWRENCE CARTHAGE WEATHERS, Australian Imperial Forces.

On September 2, 1918, north of Péronne, he went forward alone under heavy fire and bombed the enemy. When his supply of bombs was exhausted he returned for more, and with three comrades renewed the attack. Regardless of his own safety, he mounted the enemy parapet and bombed the trench with such effect that 180 prisoners and three machine guns were captured.

LANCE-CORPORAL BERNARD SIDNEY GORDON, M.M., 41st Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

On August 26–27, 1918, he went out alone and attacked an enemy machine-gun post, which he captured, along with one officer and ten men. Subsequently he cleared up a trench, and

added to his bag many other prisoners. Practically unaided, he captured in the course of these operations two officers, sixty-one men, and six machine guns.

PRIVATE WILLIAM EDGAR HOLMES, 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

On October 9, 1918, this gallant private carried in two wounded men under intense fire. While attending a third case he was severely wounded. Nevertheless, he continued his work of succour until a third wound ended his life.

PRIVATE MARTIN MOFFAT, 2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment.

On October 14, 1918, Private Moffat and his five comrades were suddenly assailed by heavy rifle-fire from a strongly-held house. With true British dash the private rushed through a hail of bullets, threw bombs into the house, and rushed in alone, killing two and capturing thirty of the occupants.

PRIVATE JOHN RYAN, 55th Australian Imperial Forces.

During the first assault on the Hindenburg Line (October 30, 1918) Private Ryan was one of the first to reach the enemy trench. His fine dash so inspired his comrades that, despite heavy fire, they overcame the garrison and occupied the position. The enemy then counter-attacked, and their bombers established themselves in the rear. The situation was most critical. Private Ryan at once led his men against the enemy bombing post, and with the assistance of three comrades scattered his assailants. He fell wounded during the pursuit.

PRIVATE JAMES P. WOODS, 48th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

On September 18, 1918, when out with a weak patrol, Private Woods discovered a very strong enemy post. With two comrades he seized it, and held it against two heavy counter-attacks. Without thought of self he mounted the parapet, and by dint of rapid fire held up the enemy until help arrived. Throughout the operations he displayed wonderful courage, determination, and enterprise.

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I have now given you accounts of all the thrice-gallant men who won the premier award of valour from the opening of the war down to the end of the year 1918. In all they number 578, and may be apportioned to the various parts of the Empire as follows: British Isles, 433; Canada, 53; Australia and New Zealand, 71; India, 17; South Africa, 4.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE WAR.

IT is said that when Marshal Foch was asked to describe the offensives which led to the final overthrow of the Germans, he struck a fierce blow with the right hand, then one with the left, and followed it up with a vigorous kick. If you examine the diagram on page 116, you will see that this is precisely what happened. The first blow was struck on the right, in the pocket between Soissons and Rheims; the second on the left, in front of Amiens; and the third in the centre, against the hilly mass of Gobain. Other blows against all parts of the line followed in quick succession, with the result that the Germans were completely baffled and bewildered. All that now remains is to tell you briefly how they were utterly discomfited and forced to sue for peace.

On the morning of 26th September, exactly ten weeks after the tide turned, Foch launched a great movement along the whole line from the Meuse to the North Sea. General Pétain, in command of the Franco-American armies in Champagne, led the way. With great secrecy the Americans had been transferred from the right to the left bank of the Meuse, and they now attacked on a twenty-mile front to the east of the Argonne Forest. An advance of seven miles was made; two important key-points, Montfaucon and Varennes, were taken; and 5,000 prisoners were captured.

Meanwhile, to the west of the forest, Gouraud's troops, with their wonted dash, went forward against the network of trenches which had so long defied them. They had to meet a very stout resistance, and in some places had to cross thirty trench lines. So formidable were the German defences that the French could only carry the posts in what the Germans call

the "fore field." Nevertheless, they took 7,000 prisoners; and next day, when the attack was renewed, they crossed the Challerange railway. While the French were thus battling in Champagne, the Americans were pressing forward vigorously, and had reached Brieulles, on the Meuse. Once they entered the town of Dun, three miles to the north, the Germans on the far side of the river would be in a very dangerous position. Longuyon, the junction of the sheaf of railways to the south of the Ardennes, would be threatened; and if a further advance could be made, the German armies would be divided into two groups, neither of which could come to the support of the other. If you examine the map on page 139, all this will be clear to you.

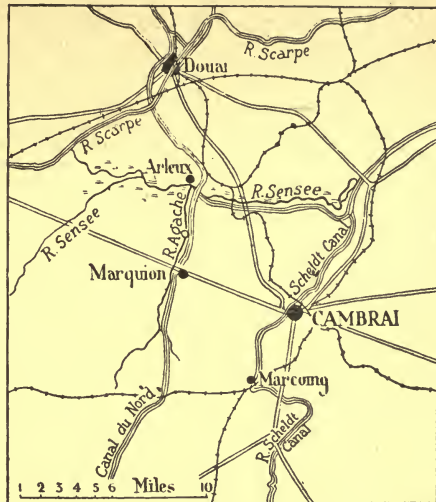
On Friday, 27th, the day after Pétain began his attack in Champagne, the British struck hard at the German defences covering Cambrai. This old city, which I briefly described in Chapter XVIII., is the junction of those roads and railways on which the enemy depended to maintain his line between the Scarpe and the Oise. Examine the map on page 255. You observe that Cambrai is protected by two water defences—the broad Scheldt Canal, running from the front of Douai to Arleux, thence along the Sensee. Turning sharply to the south, it passes in front of Cambrai and behind Marcoing. Another water defence is formed by the Agache river and the Canal du Nord, running southward from Arleux past Marquion. South of Marquion the canal is dry. Even so, it formed an important obstacle, especially for Tanks. You can easily see that the easier approach to Cambrai lay south of Marquion, across the plain traversed by Byng's Tanks in the great but unavailing attack of November 1917.

Marshal Haig's plan of campaign was to turn the two water defences by forcing the gate between them. If he could cross the Canal du Nord south of Marquion and the Scheldt Canal at Marcoing, Cambrai was bound to fall. On 22nd September, the first day of the attack, the Guards and the 3rd Division fought their way on to the Flesquières-Marcoing ridge,* while on their left, the 17th Corps, crossing the deep, muddy ditch of the Canal du Nord south of the Bapaume-Cambrai road, seized Anneux and pressed on towards Cantaing. Further south the Canadians of Byng's army entered Bourlon Wood, while on their left the 56th Division seized the crossings of the canal

* See map, p. 333, Vol. VIII.

opposite Sauchy-Lestrée. The first great obstacle was then crossed throughout its length from the Sensee marshes to Havrincourt. A fine day's work had been accomplished: over ten thousand prisoners and 200 guns had been captured. Tanks played a large part in the victory. They crossed the Canal du Nord on bridges made under fire, and some of them reached the other side by passing over the backs of other Tanks.

By midday on the 28th we had crossed the Scheldt Canal at Marcoing, and had established a bridgehead on the opposite bank. The water defences were now turned, and the fate of Cambrai was no longer in doubt. Further north the 57th Division had seized the key position of La Folie Wood, and had gained a footing in Fontaine Notre Dame. Still further north the 56th Division had fought its way across the Sensee marshes, and was attacking Arleux. At the close of three days' fighting we had broken through the main defences of the Hindenburg Line, and our forces were in the western suburbs of Cambrai. Meanwhile, troops of the Fourth Army had secured the whole line of the Scheldt Canal from Vendhuile northward; while Débeney, still further south, had encircled St. Quentin. The old city was now outflanked on the north by British and Americans, and on the south by the French. It could no longer be held, and the Germans heralded their departure from the place by setting it on fire.



On the day that St. Quentin fell, Marshal Haig reported that during the month of September our troops had captured 66,300 prisoners, including 1,500 officers; also 700 guns and some thousands of machine guns. During August and September the total captures by the British amounted to 123,618 prisoners, including 2,783 officers, and about 1,400 guns. This result had only been achieved by very hard fighting and incessant effort on the part of our men. The battles in front of Cambrai

were terribly fierce: the Germans had their backs to the wall, and the British were animated by the spirit of victory.

While the tremendous battle was in progress along the Hindenburg Line, Marshal Foch gave the word for the Belgians and the Second British Army to attack in Flanders. Try to imagine the plight of the enemy. He was being fiercely assailed on both sides of the Argonne Forest, and all the way from Champagne to the north of the Sensee marshes. Now he was called upon to meet a new onset in the northern sector of his line. He had no reserves, and he could only find men to resist this fresh attack by weakening his defences elsewhere. When King Albert and General Plumer struck in Flanders he was at his wits' end. Never was a High Command so terribly embarrassed.

The Belgians attacked north of the Ypres salient; the British to the south of it. Wonderful success attended their offensive. They rushed through the enemy's front positions, and within thirty-six hours had carried all the ridges. On the second day they were on ground untrodden by an Allied soldier, save as a prisoner, since the early months of the war. Within forty-eight hours they had crossed the Menin-Roulers road. Once more the Belgians had proved their mettle. In forty-eight hours they had carried positions which our troops only conquered during three months of hard fighting in the year 1917.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VICTORY !

BEFORE I describe our further success in Flanders, I must return to the story of General Pétain's offensive east of the Oise. You will remember that in the attack on 26th and 27th September the Americans pushed on to Brieulles, and were in a fair way to cut the sheaf of railways south of the Ardennes. Von Gallwitz was obliged to milk his line in order to find reinforcements to hold the Americans back. Owing to the narrow front on which they were operating, and the flanking fire of the enemy from the eastern bank of the Meuse, further progress was slow and difficult. A fine attack on 8th October gave the Americans possession of a group of villages on this eastern bank of the river. They were now able to force the German guns back from the Meuse, and to advance once more.

Meanwhile Gouraud found that he could make no headway by means of a frontal attack to the west of the Argonne Forest, and on 4th October he moved his attack westward along the little river Suippe. At the same time he ordered the Fifth French Army to cross the Aisne between Berry-au-Bac and Rheims and threaten Brimont. The Germans were thus assailed from the east and from the west, and were forced to cross the Suippe in hasty retreat. Rheims was freed, the Moronvillers heights were abandoned, and a way was opened to the north through the gap at Berry-au-Bac. On 11th October, after severe fighting, the enemy began to retreat all the way from the Oise to the Argonne. The Ladies' Road was given up, and Mangin, moving rapidly forward north of the Gobain Forest, entered La Fère. Next day he reached Laon. The great buttress of the German line in the West had fallen. Pétain was now forced to give his troops a rest ; but on the night of 18th October they went

Map to illustrate the Final Stages of the War.

forward again, and occupied the line shown on the map. (See page 258.)

While Pétain's Franco-American army was fighting its way forward between the Oise and the Meuse, an even more furious battle was raging west of the former river. On 3rd October General Braithwaite attacked north of St. Quentin, and, breaking through a powerful defensive line, captured 4,000 prisoners. Further north, British troops pushed across the Scheldt Canal at Le Catelet, and next day established themselves on a plateau in the bend of the canal to the north. Speedily the whole length of the canal from Cambrai to St. Quentin fell into our hands.

A lull now set in; but on the morning of 8th October our Third and Fourth Armies attacked along a twenty-mile front from Cambrai to St. Quentin, and by dint of hard fighting went forward more than three miles. The enemy was by this time in full retreat, and the roads along which he passed at top speed were littered with arms and equipment flung aside by the fugitives. Early the next day (9th October) Canadians entered Cambrai, and were quickly followed by other troops. The old city, though on fire, was not badly wrecked.

Without a pause our men continued their advance, driving the enemy before them whenever he attempted to make a stand. By the evening of the 10th the river Selle had been reached, and Le Cateau had been entered, though for the next week or more it was a No Man's Land. During this day 10,000 prisoners and 200 guns were captured.

Along the line of the Selle the enemy made a stubborn stand. He was forced to do so, for the British were now in a position to push on through Maubeuge to Namur, where they would be astride of the only possible routes of retreat from Northern France to Germany. While the struggle continued along the Selle river, Marshal Haig ordered the Fourth Army, which was reinforced by American troops, to make a joint attack with Débeney's forces on a nine-mile front to the east of Bohain, which you will see on the map about ten miles east of Le Catelet. The attack began on the morning of 17th October, and by the end of the day the line of the Selle south of Le Cateau had been carried. This success broke down the resistance further north, and by the 20th of the month British troops were within twenty miles of Maubeuge and within sixty miles of Namur.

Now we must turn to Flanders, where a splendid advance was being made. On the morning of the 14th King Albert, with the Belgians and the Second British Army, together with a French corps, struck east and west of Roulers. By the end of the second day the Allied line had been pushed forward to Courtrai, which was entered by British troops. The Germans along the Flanders coast were now in danger of being cut off, and on the 16th they began a hasty retreat. On the same day Plumer's troops crossed the Lys between Armentières and Menin, and by evening had reached the outskirts of Turcoing. On the 17th the Belgians entered Ostend. Though the enemy lost 12,000 prisoners and more than one hundred guns during the first two days' fighting, von Armin got away with the bulk of his army and stores.

The success of the Flanders offensive, and the steady and continuous pressure of the British between Cambrai and St. Quentin, placed the Germans astride of the La Bassée Canal in peril. They were, as I have already explained, in a bag, the mouth of which was being drawn tighter and tighter every day. To avoid being caught, they had now to retreat, and were followed up rapidly by General Birdwood's troops. By the 4th October Birdwood was in a position to shell Lille; but not wishing to damage the city, he waited for Plumer's troops to cross the Lys and Horne's army to cross the Scarpe. These two enveloping movements forced the enemy out of Lille, which fell into our hands on the evening of the 17th. The same advances gave us Douai.

The whole Allied front was now going forward. In Flanders the enemy was retreating from the Lys towards the Scheldt. Further south Birdwood was closing in on Tournai, and Horne was threatening to encircle Valenciennes. In the centre Haig's Third and Fourth Armies were moving up the west bank of the Sambre Canal, while Débeney's First French Army was pressing forward on the east bank of the same waterway. Further east Pétain, with the Fourth, Fifth, and Tenth French Armies, was pushing northward out of Champagne, fighting hard, but making headway every day, and slowly but surely drawing nearer to the main German line of retreat. On his right the First American Army was struggling forward in the northern outskirts of the Argonne Forest, while the Second American Army was advancing on the other side.

I need not trouble you with the story of our further progress. A glance at the map on page 258 will show you the line which the Allies held on the historic morning of 11th November. That morning the armistice was signed. One hour before our bugles "sang truce" Canadians entered Mons, and stood upon the battlefield where the "Old Contemptibles" made their gallant stand against overwhelming hordes of the enemy on August 23, 1914. As far as the British were concerned, the war ended where it had begun. At this time the Germans were everywhere "on the run." They had been hopelessly defeated all along the line, and were in disorderly retreat through the tangled country of the Ardennes. It was clear that another week would have witnessed their destruction. The Allied victory was complete.

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It was the surrender of Germany's Allies that marked the beginning of her end. When Bulgaria, Austria, and Turkey sued for peace her case was hopeless. The defection of her Allies had deprived her of liquid fuel, without which her aeroplanes could not fly, her submarines could not dive, nor her army tractors move. The surrender of Austria and Turkey robbed her of those oil fields in Rumania, Galicia, and Baku from which she had drawn plentiful supplies. The whole nation, so long on short commons, was war-weary; bitter anger against the Kaiser and his friends began to rise like a flood, and revolution raised its head. On 4th October Prince Max of Baden, who had been appointed Chancellor, begged President Wilson to suspend hostilities as a prelude to peace. A correspondence began, in the course of which the President insisted that any armistice which was made must be of such a character that Germany could not fight again. When this was clearly understood, and the German Government had agreed to the fourteen conditions of peace* laid down by the

* Mr. Wilson's "fourteen points" were to the following effect :—

1. All treaties of peace to be made openly, frankly, and in the public view, without private understandings of any kind.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation, alike in peace and in war, upon the high seas, except when the League of Nations shall close them in whole or in part for the purpose of enforcing its decrees.

3. Tariffs to be removed, as far as possible, and free trade to be established among all the nations consenting to the peace and combining to maintain it.

President in his address to Congress on January 8, 1918, he suggested to the Allies that an armistice might be arranged. Representatives of the Allies met, and informed the President that they were willing to make peace with Germany on the basis of his "fourteen points," but that they were not prepared to commit themselves on the question of the "freedom of the seas." Further, they announced that they would demand compensation from Germany for all damage "done to the civilian population of the Allies and to their property, either by land, by sea, or from the air." At the same time, the War Council empowered Marshal Foch to receive envoys from the German Government, and to inform them of the terms of the armistice.

On 8th November Herr Erzberger and four other delegates arrived at Rethondes, a station about four miles from Compiègne, on the Soissons railway, and were there received by Marshal Foch, General Weygand, and Admiral Wemyss. The German Government asked that hostilities should immediately cease; but to this Marshal Foch would not agree. The terms of the armistice were then handed to the German representatives, who seem to have been surprised at their severity. They declined to sign them until the Home Government had agreed to them. Couriers were at once dispatched to Berlin.

Meanwhile there was something like a revolution in Ger-

4. The nations to give guarantees that they will reduce their armies and navies to the lowest limit consistent with safety in their own countries.

5. Colonial claims to be adjusted upon the principle that the interests of the populations concerned must be taken into full consideration.

6. All Russian territory to be freed from invaders, and Russia to be free to choose whatever form of government she desires.

7. The Germans to leave Belgium and restore it to its former condition in all respects.

8. All French territory to be freed and the invaded portions to be restored. Alsace-Lorraine to be given back to France.

9. The frontiers of Italy to be readjusted; territory inhabited by Italians shall belong to Italy.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary to have self-government.

11. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro to be freed and restored. Serbia to have free and secure access to the sea.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire to remain under their own sovereignty, but other nations under Turkish rule to have self-government. The Dardanelles to be a free highway for all nations.

13. Poland to become an independent state.

14. A League of Nations to be established for the protection of great and small states alike.

many. The Emperor abdicated on 9th November, and Prince Max gave place to Herr Ebert, a Socialist saddler. On 10th November the new Government instructed its delegates to accept the terms offered.

At 5 a.m. on 11th November the armistice was signed, and at 11 a.m. on that date the war ceased on all fronts.

The Allies were determined that, come what might, Germany should be unable to renew the war. They therefore demanded, amongst other things, that within fourteen days the Germans should leave all the invaded countries in Belgium, France, Alsace-Lorraine, and Luxemburg, and that they should surrender in good condition 5,000 heavy and field guns, 30,000 machine guns, 3,000 flame-throwers, and 2,000 aeroplanes. The Germans were not only to leave the invaded countries, but were to yield up the principal crossings of the Rhine at Mayence, Coblenz, and Cologne, together with bridgeheads at these points extending to about nineteen miles on the right bank. Further, a neutral zone was to be set up on the right bank of the Rhine between that river and a line drawn six miles distant from the Dutch frontier to the Swiss frontier. All roads, railways, waterways, bridges, telegraphs, and telephones were to be left intact, and no destruction of any kind was to be committed. Five thousand locomotives, 150,000 wagons, and 5,000 motor lorries in good working order were to be handed over, and all stores of coal and material for working the railways were to be left in their present position. All Allied prisoners of war were to be released immediately, but no German prisoners were to be set free by the Allies.

All German troops in Russia, Rumania, and Turkey were to be withdrawn ; the treaties of Bukarest and Brest-Litovsk were to be of no effect ; and the Allies were to be permitted free access to the territories given up by the Germans, either through Danzig or by way of the Vistula. Within one month all German troops were to leave East Africa.

So much for the military conditions. The naval terms were equally severe. The Germans were to surrender to the Allies and to the United States for internment 6 battle cruisers, 10 battleships, 8 light cruisers, 50 destroyers of the most modern type, and 160 submarines. All other surface warships were to be collected in bases named by the Allies, and, after being completely disarmed, were to be placed under their super-

vision. All naval prisoners were to be released on the same terms as military prisoners. All coastal fortifications in all the entrances from the Kattegat into the Baltic were to be occupied by the Allies. Every vessel seized by the Germans was to be restored, and the blockade was to go on until further notice. Finally, the armistice was to continue thirty-six days, but might be extended for a further period if necessary. On the other hand, either side could end it by giving forty-eight hours' notice.

* * * * * * *

Such was the armistice which the Germans accepted. It was equivalent to unconditional surrender, and was a clear proof that the military might which was to conquer the world had been crushed beyond recovery. About 10.30 in the morning of 11th November the news that the armistice had been signed reached London, and at once the great city became a place of waving flags and excited crowds. City men gathered in front of the Mansion House, and with deep emotion sang the Doxology; while multitudes crowded in front of Buckingham Palace to cheer the King and Queen, who had so fully and faithfully shared with their people the trials and anxieties of four long years of war. Parliament met in the afternoon, but immediately adjourned to St. Margaret's Church to offer "humble and reverent thanks" to Almighty God for the great deliverance. Speedily the news flew over the country, and everywhere there was rejoicing. But it was no frenzy of delight. Over 700,000 of the brightest and best lives in the country had been sacrificed (see note, p. 265), and there was scarcely a family in the land where mourning did not add a drop of bitterness to the cup of joy. We had won the war, but at such a terrible cost that there was no exultation in our triumph. All felt constrained to cry with the Psalmist: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give we the praise."

* * * * * * *

November 21, 1918, was the day of Germany's great humiliation. The sun rose that morning on a majestic spectacle. Out in the North Sea stretched two long parallel lines of British warships, all cleared for action, and with every gun and torpedo tube manned. They were waiting for the first and the main instalment of the German High Seas Fleet to surrender to the might of Britain's sea-power. At 9.30 the battle cruiser

Seydlitz hove in sight. Astern of her, as far as the eye could reach, were four other battle cruisers, nine battleships, five light cruisers, three aeroplane ships, and forty-nine destroyers. One by one they came up out of the mist, and, with British vessels to the right and left and all around them, the procession moved slowly into the Forth. Then came the crowning ceremony. As the German vessels approached the anchoring ground outside the island of Inchkeith, Admiral Beatty sent out this message :—

" *The German flag will be hauled down at sunset, and will not be hoisted again without permission.*"

The sunset bugle call rang out, and the black-cross flags at the mizzen of seventy-one German vessels fluttered down.

Our casualties in the war were as follows :—

	Killed, or died from Wounds.	Missing, including Prisoners.	Wounded.
ARMY.			
Officers	37,876	12,094	92,664
Other Ranks	620,828	347,051	1,939,478
Total	658,704	359,145	2,032,142
NAVY.			
Officers	2,466	237	805
Other Ranks	30,895	985	4,378
Total	33,361	1,122	5,183
Grand Total	692,065	360,367	2,037,325

To these numbers must be added 19,000 deaths amongst soldiers not forming part of the Expeditionary Forces, and 17,956 officers and men of British merchant and fishing vessels who lost their lives through enemy action—making a total of 3,126,713.

Germany's casualty list was as follows :—Dead, 1,600,000 ; missing, 103,000 ; prisoners, 618,000 ; wounded, 4,064,000 : total, 6,385,000.

The French losses were :—Dead, 1,071,300 ; missing and prisoners, 760,300 : total, 1,831,600.

The Russians suffered 9,150,000 casualties, including 1,700,000 killed, 4,950,000 wounded, and 2,500,000 prisoners.

In all, the total casualties of the war were said to be 26 millions, and its cost to all the fighting nations by the end of the year 1918 £40,000,000,000.

"The German Flag will be hauled down at sunset, and will not be hoisted again without permission."

(By permission of The Illustrated London News.)

On November 21st, 1918, seventy-one German ships of war surrendered, and at sunset hauled down their flags. Our illustration shows the actual lowering of the flag on several of the surrendered vessels in the Forth.

"The surrender of the German Fleet," wrote Sir David Beatty, "has secured the freedom of the seas for such as pass thereon upon their lawful occasions, and is a testimony to the value of sea power which the people of the British Empire will forget at their peril."

* * * * * * *

In the great hour of rejoicing, with Germany beaten to her knees, the wretched Kaiser and his still more wretched son fugitives in Holland, Karl of Austria despoiled of his throne, red revolution stalking the Central Empires, and Bulgaria and Turkey utterly overthrown, we could claim without a shadow of boastfulness that Britain had played the leading part in bringing about the utter and complete downfall of the enemy.

It was the British navy which made the victory possible, and "the hammer-blows of the British army" that cracked the anvil of German resistance. Our men fought in every theatre of war, on all the fronts north and south, east and west. More than seven millions of them took up arms, and on every battlefield they displayed that daring in attack and that doggedness in defence which have always been our national boast and pride. In the days when the clouds gathered thick around us and other nations lost heart, our men at the front and our people at home showed no sign of wavering. They bore every buffet of fate with calm confidence, and when the end came they could say, as Pitt said in 1805, "We have saved England by our efforts and Europe by our example."

From first to last Britain was in the thick of the fray. On that Sunday, in August 1914, when the French gave way before the terrific German onset, it was the small but glorious army of "Old Contemptibles" which saved the French flank and averted the rolling up of the French armies during the long retreat to the Marne. During the "race to the sea" it was the same indomitable band that held off the German hordes in the first flush of their mighty strength. In July and August 1916 our citizen armies revealed the same courage and fortitude during the Homeric battles on the Somme. In the hour of victory, when we are tempted to dwell upon the final struggles, we must remember that the battles of 1916 first convinced the German soldier that the Briton was his master. Never forget that in this long war of exhaustion no single British life has been sacrificed in vain. Every drop of British blood that was

shed in the first three years of the war contributed to the final victory.

Never from the moment when the front hardened and the long trench war began, right down to the hour when Russia wrought her own ruin and laid a grievous burden upon the backs of the Allies, did the Germans break out of the iron cage in which they had been contained. It is true that we failed in many of our attempts to pierce the German defences, and that in some of the earlier battles grievous mistakes were made. But we suffered no great set-back until the spring of the year 1918, when the Germans, rallying their full remaining strength, made their final bid for victory. During that dread and perilous time it was the British Fourth Army which stopped the advance on Amiens and saved the Allied line from being broken in twain. Then, with the advent of the Americans, the hour arrived when Foch was able to strike with terrible might that series of rapid and bewildering blows which the Germans, devoid of reserves, could not ward off. The armistice came just in the nick of time to save them from complete destruction.

While Britain was the mainstay of the alliance in the West, she took the lion's share of the fighting in the East. In Mesopotamia the war was all her own. It was she who struggled doggedly against swamp and malaria, and secured the land routes to India while she constantly harried the Turk. In Palestine British troops destroyed the Turkish armies in a series of brilliant victories, and drove the Ottoman power out of the war. "Praise to our Indian brethren; let the dark face have his due." The bulk of our forces in Mesopotamia and Palestine were Indian soldiers, who fought and died for us with notable heroism.

Our "glorious failure" in Gallipoli was by no means the costly error that it seemed at the time. It engaged large masses of Turkish troops that otherwise would have fought elsewhere for the enemy. How near it came to success we shall never know. Observers in Constantinople have since told us that a few more weeks of struggle would certainly have given us victory. Not in vain did our gallant lads lay down their lives on the scrub-covered hills and ravines of Gallipoli.

Nor did we play a minor part in Macedonia. For three long years we faced the Bulgars, and taught them the meaning of British doggedness. It was our long watch on the Doiran

front that paved the way for that swift and brilliant stroke which drove Bulgaria to her knees and broke the first link in the chain of the Central Powers. It was the British navy which made the Macedonian campaign possible.

Notable as were the services of our soldiers, it was our sea-power that gave us the capacity for victory. From the moment when the British navy contained the German High Seas Fleet, and swept the enemy commerce from the ocean, our triumph was never in doubt, however long it might be delayed. The war was won by sea, for the sea controls the land. The greatest military array known to the history of the world could make no enduring conquests while it was cut off from the ocean. We, on the other hand, supreme upon the seas, could array armies of millions, transport them where we willed, and by means of our great shipping resources maintain them on distant battlefields. Had not the British navy secured the pathways of the ocean, America could never have sent her millions across the Atlantic.

Then, again, the blockade of Germany was the work of our navy. Though we did not starve out the Fatherland, we gripped her vitals by denying her those plentiful supplies of food and raw materials which were necessary to sustain the endurance of her people and fully maintain her armies in battle. When menaced with her greatest peril, the submarine, Britain displayed wonderful energy and resource not only in fighting the secret and deadly foe, but in building ships to take the place of those which had been sunk. During the war "Britannia ruled the waves," and by ruling the waves saved the Allied cause.

* * * * * * *

I must not end this book without paying the highest possible tribute to the magnificent courage, endurance, and skill of our sailors and soldiers. From every corner of the British Empire they came, freely and gladly, to fight with the hosts of Freedom against the "dark forces" that would have plunged the world into a slavery worse than death. The Dominions sent us some of the most daring and gallant men who ever shouldered a rifle, and India gave us the services of tens of thousands of her devoted sons. To the men of the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force, as well as to the munition and other workers at home, we owe a debt which we can never repay. The old

constancy and fortitude of the race shone brightly during every hour of the long and bitter struggle.

Under the strain of weeks, months, and years of battling with mud, rain, and frost, and in the constant presence of wounds and death, our men "stuck it" with marvellous patience and cheerfulness. Our airmen, whirling, looping, and swooping thousands of feet above the ground, risked everything and dared everything, despite the knowledge that only by a miracle could they escape certain death. The men of the navy fought to preserve the Empire in the spirit of those old sea-dogs who gave their bones to found it, and the fishermen and "longshoremen" who manned the mine-sweepers, the mystery ships, and the coastal craft were no whit inferior in valour, alertness, and skill. Nor must I omit to mention the men of the merchant service, who braved the submarine danger with unflinching courage, and, though torpedoed in one vessel, hastened to "sign on" in another, so that the country might be preserved from starvation, and the armies overseas might not be stinted of supplies.

> "Grim heroes all, your voices call
> While ever the waves leap high,
> Inspiring the creed of an island breed
> That has learned to dare and die."

Those who will never return to us, but lie sleeping their last sleep in the soil of distant lands or beneath the restless wave, we must ever hold in loving reverence; and those who have lost health and limb in the great and glorious cause of Freedom must ever remain the objects of our undying gratitude and tender care.

* * * * * * *

In the course of this work I have recorded countless heroisms and have related numberless stories which stir the heart like the sound of a trumpet. But there is another side to war which no tales of valour and self-sacrifice must make us forget, even in the hour of our triumph. We must think of the awful bloodshed; the horrible waste of human life; the agony and tears of those who have lost their dearest and best; the tens of thousands of ruined homes, each one the centre of a family life, and the dearly-loved roof-tree of parents and children; the carefully-tilled fields, carved out of the waste by generations

of toiling men and women, and now turned into waste once more ; the sufferings of those who have fallen into the hands of a pitiless enemy ; the loads of debt which will cripple the nations for generations to come. If we realize all this, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that war is the most terrible disease that afflicts mankind, and that the greatest and most blessed work in which we can engage is to strive, heart and soul, for the perpetual peace of the world.

Never again must the nations fight out an Armageddon. If they do, civilization will come to an end, and barbarism will possess the world. We must end war, or war will end us. During four years of incessant effort men devoted their ingenuity and skill to the invention and manufacture of weapons more and more terrible in their powers of destruction. It is a saddening thought that men are far more fertile in devising means of destroying human life than in saving it. At the beginning of the war the aeroplane was a toy ; now it is a death-dealing instrument of terrible range and effect. Guns have been produced which carry seventy-five miles ; explosives have been invented which change the face of a countryside. Poison gas has become an everyday incident of war ; flame-throwers have added the torture of burning to the anguish of wounds. If the practice of war is to continue, still more horrible means of destruction will be devised. It does not pass the bounds of imagination to conceive that in some future struggle men will fire the microbes of deadly diseases from their guns, and thus wipe out whole nations.

All down the ages, in every country and in every century, men have dreamed of that blessed time when " they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; " when " nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid." During this war the unspeakable madness of armed strife has bred loathing in the hearts and minds of myriads of men in all nations. Before the third year of the struggle had ended one of the declared aims of the Allies was to eliminate this greatest of all tragedies from the life of mankind by forming a League of Nations to preserve the peace of the world. Should the Almighty so will it, the greatest curse of the ages will thus give birth to its greatest

blessing. Hereafter we may see the nations setting themselves to win bloodless conquests over sin, poverty, and disease, and striving with heroic determination to bless and ennoble mankind. God grant that it may be so.

* * * * * * *

One final word to those who have so patiently followed me through the three thousand five hundred and fifty-two pages of this work. Most of those who read my first page and are now reading my last have left school days behind them in the course of the war, and are now standing on the threshold of manhood and womanhood. To them, one and all, I proffer the sincerest of good wishes for long life, health, and happiness. Soon they will be citizens of the British Empire, with a voice in all its concerns and a responsibility for all its acts. Let them remember at what great price their Empire has been preserved to them, and love it and cherish it accordingly. Let them remember, too, how nearly the civilization of the world has escaped destruction. Years will pass over their heads, and their recollections of the horror and misery of Armageddon, now sharp and clear, will grow faint and blurred. But they must never forget the Great War, lest upon those who follow them an even greater curse may descend. Let them earnestly and constantly labour for that glad, good time—

> "When the battle flags are furled
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

THE END.

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